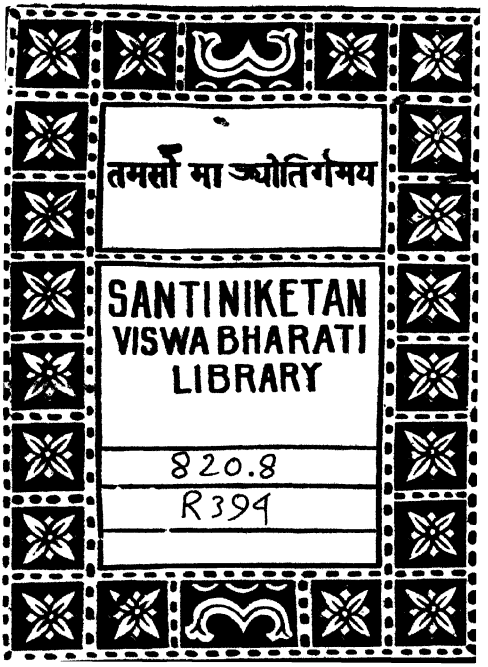

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N THE GARDEN
)F DELIGHT

COLLECTION OF PROSE AND
ERSE FOR ALL LOVERS OF
ATURE AND THE OPEN AIR




" I wandered on, unwitting quite,
Through all that Garden of Delight,
Until I came to where was seen
A fountain, girt with verdure green,
As fair as that wherein did gaze
Narcissus in the olden days."

ANONYMOUS



GO FORTH UNDER THE OPEN SKY & LIST TO NATURE'S TEACHINGS

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

A NATURE ANTHOLOGY IN PROSE & VERSE BY JOHN RICHARDSON



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TO
EVELYN

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THERE is nothing so invigorating as an early morning walk through well-cultivated fields and gardens. It is a most delightful pastime, as well as being conducive to health; to get away from the madding crowd out into the open country is like living a new life, and we are led to imagine ourselves in fairy-land, or in another and a better world, where every delicate sense is delighted, and all around breathes fragrance and expands beauty:

> "For here our life, exempt from public haunt,
> Found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and health in everything."

Nature is an everlasting pageant of beauty; the seasons come and go, only to return again with new delights, and it is hoped that this little volume will bring many out into the fields with added zest to commune with nature, to hear the birds singing their sweet songs, and the insects buzzing through the air, or to listen to shepherds telling their tale

> "Under the hawthorn in the dale."

"To enjoy a garden," says Shirley Hibberd, "a man must be a student of Nature, a good weather prophet, something of a botanist, very quick-sighted in matters of vegetable physiology, accustomed to observation, and that 'forecasting of the whole,' which Cowper notes as so essential to success." Those who dabble with

little town plots and never soar beyond paternal laurels and sweet-williams have an idea that the gardener's season begins in May and ends in September; but your genuine gardener finds as much to do, and as many pleasures in his work, in the depth of winter as in the height of summer.

We find the beauties of nature regarded as one of the great pleasures of life, and many hundreds of volumes have been written setting forth its praise. It would not be out of place were we to mention here a few volumes of praiseworthy note by lovers of nature, apart from the many poets who have touched upon the subject in some form or another: the works of Richard Jefferies; the works of Richard Kearton; the works of George Borrow; the works of Mrs. Earle; the works of Gertrude Jekyll; *The Country Day by Day*, E. Kay Robinson; *The Glamour of the Earth*, G. A. B. Dewar; *Elizabeth and her German Garden; The Solitary Summer; The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft; Our Village*, Miss Mitford; *The Garden That I Love*, Alfred Austin; *The Natural History of Selborne*, Gilbert White; *Stray Leaves from a Border Garden; Days and Hours in a Garden*, Hon. Mrs. E. V. Boyle; *The Old Garden*, Margaret Deland; *Our Gardens*, Dean Hole; *Things about our Neighbourhood*, M. M. Dowie; *In Wind and Wild*, Eric Parker; and the two beautiful allegories by Coulson Kernahan, "The Garden of God," and "'I Believe'—in the Wild-flower and the Dawn."

My best thanks are due to the following Authors

and Publishers who have so kindly permitted me to quote from their respective works: to Miss M. Betham-Edwards for "An Autumn Song" and "The Sorrel Blossoms"; to Miss G. M. Godden for the poem by the late Miss R. Monson, called "July"; to Miss Lois Vidal for "My Garden is not Grand," which appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*; to Miss Ethel Rolt Wheeler for "Spring in Ireland," from the *Atlantic Monthly*; to Mr. Coulson Kernahan for the extract "The Loveliness of Wild Flowers," culled from "'I Believe'—in the Wild-flower and the Dawn," which appeared in *Dreams, Dead Earnest and Half Jest*; to Mrs. Josephine Preston Peabody Marks for "The Trees," which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*; to Mr. Walter Smyth for his poem on "Old Time Flowers," also "Flowers of Kindness," which appeared in *Chambers' Journal* for September 1904; to the Rev. John Horne for the use of a letter written by Birket Foster; to Mr. John Murray for the four quotations from *The Day Book of Melisande*; to the Religious Tract Society for "A Song of Hope," by Christian Burke, and "Memories," by Constance M. Lowe; to Messrs. Wm. Blackwood & Sons for the use of George Eliot's poems: "Pablo's Song" from *The Spanish Gypsy*, and the extract from *The Legend of Jubal*; to Messrs. G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., for Coventry Patmore's poem "Winter"; to the executors of the late Mr. George Gissing for selections from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*; to the De La More Press for the poem called "The Spring-time Meeting Again," by

R. Glynn Vivian, from his book, *Out of Darkness, Light!*; to the Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers of the following authors, for permission to include Longfellow's "Flowers," Whittier's "The Sycamores," the selections from Lowell's "My Garden Acquaintance," and also a selection from Dr. Holmes's "Elsie Venner"; and to the Agricultural and Horticultural Association, Ltd.; for the poem by Nora Chesson entitled "A Field of Bluebells," which appeared in their *One and All Gardening* for 1907.

If any selection has been included for which consent has not been obtained, it is due to my inability to trace the ownership, and I express my regret if I have so trespassed.

J. R.

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THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT



FANCY

Ever let the Fancy roam;
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let wingéd Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the cakéd snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overaw'd,
Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,

From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heapéd Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reapéd corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearléd with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celléd sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;

Everything is spoilt by use:
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let then wingéd Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.
—Let the wingéd Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

JOHN KEATS

THE SUN-DIAL

"Ah, never doth Time travel faster
Than when his way lies among flowers."—T. MOORE

WHAT a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dulness of communication, compared with the simple altar-like structure and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens. Why has it almost everywhere vanished? If its business use be superseded by more elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labours, of pleasures not protracted after sunset, of temperance, and good hours.

It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers to spring by; for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by; for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd carved it out quaintly in the sun; and, turning philosopher by the very occupation, provided it with mottoes more touching than tombstones.

CHARLES LAMB

THE MUSIC OF NATURE

THE songs of Nature never cease;
Her players sue not for release,
In nearer fields, on hills afar,
Attendant her musicians are;
For age, from brook or hedge or tree,
Is born some gentle melody.
The dearer voices never die,—
A song to soothe is ever nigh;
The very air is music blent—
An universal instrument.
With myriad harmonies alive,
The loves of Nature aye survive;
Beneath the voice of brook or bird,
There is another, nigh unheard.
Does sound a moment drop the strain,
Then silence takes it up again,
Still sweeter—as a memory
Is sweeter than the things that be.
Pleased Nature's heart is always young;
Her golden harp is ever strung.
Singing and playing, day to day,
She passes happy on her way.

J. V. CHENEY

NATURE, TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

THE love of Nature in and for herself, or as a mirror for the moods of the mind, is a modern thing. The fleeing to her as an escape from man was brought into fashion by Rousseau; for his prototype Petrarch, though he had a taste for pretty scenery, had a true antique horror for the grander aspects of nature. He got once to the top of Mount Ventoux, but it is very plain that he did not enjoy it. Indeed, it is only within a century or so that the search after the picturesque has been a safe employment. It is not so even now in Greece or Southern Italy. Where the Anglo-Saxon carves his cold fowl, and leaves the relics of his picnic, the ancient or mediæval man might be pretty confident that some ruffian would try the edge of his knife on a chicken of the Platonic sort, and leave more precious bones as an offering to the genius of the place. The ancients were certainly more social than we, though that, perhaps, was natural enough, when a good part of the world was still covered with forest. They huddled together in cities as well for safety as to keep their minds warm. The Romans had a fondness for country life, but they had fine roads, and Rome was always within easy reach. The Author of the Book of Job is the earliest I know of who showed any profound sense of the moral meaning of the outward world; and I think none has approached him since, though Wordsworth comes nearest with the first two books of the "Prelude." But their feeling is not precisely of the kind I speak of as modern, and which gave rise to what is called descriptive poetry. Chaucer opens his Clerk's Tale with a bit of landscape

admirable for its large style, and as well composed as any Claude.

"There is right at the west end of Itaille,
Down at the root of Vesulus the cold,
A lusty plain abundant of vitaille,
Where many a tower and town thou mayst behold,
That founded were in time of fathers old.
And many an other délectable sight;
And Saluëës this noble country hight."

What an airy precision of touch there is here, and what a sure eye for the points of character in landscape! But the picture is altogether subsidiary. No doubt the works of Salvator Rosa and Gaspar Poussin show that there must have been some amateur taste for the grand and terrible in scenery; but the British poet Thomson was the first to do with words what they had done partially with colours. He was turgid, no good metrist, and his English is like a translation from one of those poets who wrote in Latin after it was dead; but he was a man of sincere genius, and not only English, but European literature is largely in his debt. He was the inventor of cheap amusement for the million, to be had of All-out-doors for the asking. It was his impulse which unconsciously gave direction to Rousseau, and it is to the school of Jean Jacques that we owe St. Pierre, Cowper, Chateaubriand, Wordsworth, Byron, Lamartine, George Sand, Ruskin—the great painters of ideal landscape.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

IN A GARDEN

Who loves fair flowers,
And shady bowers,
And all the joys a garden brings,
Knows sweet content
And merriment
Far more than happiest of kings.

The whispering trees,
The murmuring bees,
Each flower that nods, each bird that sings,
Are good friends, sent
With sweet content,
Unknown to happiest of kings.

ANONYMOUS

THE JOY OF A GARDEN

O blinding sunshine and green coolness! O fresh morning air and dew-powdered gossamers! O wakeful colours and sleepy odours! O shivering leaves and rustling bird's-wing! O joyful dawn, with hum of voices! and O sultry noon, with dead stillness, silent, and oppressive!

O mossy turf! O sparkling fountain! O dark mould, that, out of thy dead heart, sendest up the joy of summer in flowers that rise like souls released from the sepulchre! O emerald spring, crouching in shyness! O lusty summer, confronting the sun in thy bold strength and ardour! O fiery autumn, gathering the glories of

all seasons to thyself, to swell the grandeur of thy flaming sacrifice! and O hoary winter, magician and destroyer, by whose touch the world is hushed to rest, and the grave of beauty garnished with a robe of whiteness! Where, but in a garden, shall we see and hear, and press to our heart of hearts the precious wealth of a whole creation? Where, but in a garden, shall we meet with genuine heart-ease?

Where, but in a garden, learn the sweet idleness that seems like a dream of Eden? Where, but in a garden, acquire the quick action and the anxious thought, that prove us to be fallen creatures?

Where, but in a garden, realise our dependence upon God, and understand the links that bind us to Him? Where else see the lilies "how they grow," and the sparrows that fall not but at His bidding? Where, but in a garden, feel the full remembrance that man fell from God in the very morning of his creation, and thenceforth read reproaches in the thorns and thistles that choke the pathway of His life?

Where, but in the world of greenness, and life, and everlasting change, and the growth on growth of things indissolubly linked together, read the true lesson of God's love for us, and see the upward yearning of all things that teach us we may be saved? O heaven and O earth! in the garden is your meeting-place, for there God talked with Adam, and there the Saviour wept in agony for all.

O polar frost, and O torrid sunshine! O bright orient, and O mysterious occident? your delicatest darlings here blossom side by side, and shake their honey-bells together; for a garden is a microcosm of the world, a living map of climes and seasons, a gathering of all things curious, and useful, and beautiful, from "the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on

the wall"; and if it may be looked on as an open scroll of pictured emblems by Almighty fingers, it also illustrates the particoloured structure of the human brain, which draws its knowledge from far sources, and spreads abroad ten thousand busy hands to grope and gather from darkness many sources of light and power.

O moist palate! longing for luscious fruits. O dainty eye! seeking festivals of colour. O heart! panting for a lovely ministration, and expanding in the bliss of this hushed beauty, seek your joy in the garden, where the voice of God may still be heard among the trees, and a deep sense of peace shall possess thee.

SHIRLEY HIBBERD
(For many years the editor of
The Gardeners' Magazine)

A GARDEN

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

ALFRED TENNYSON
(*The Gardener's Daughter*)

MY GARDEN IS NOT GRAND

My garden is not grand, but gay and sweet:
A gladsome, lovesome, and a sun-kissed bower
Wherein doth many a fair and fragrant flower
In joyful fellowship with others meet.
The honeysuckle, hanging o'er the seat,
Sheds her delicious fragrance, hour by hour,
On all around, as when a golden shower
Refreshes plants that droop beneath the heat.

Ah! would my heart might be as sweet within
In rosy freshness like this garden mine;
And would the gentle rain wash out my sin,
So make me like the silver lily shine;
Then might I all the threads of life so spin
Into a dream of loveliness divine.

LOIS VIDAL
(*The Westminster Gazette*)

GARDENING

THE honest fellow who comes to dig in my garden is puzzled to account for my peculiarities; I often catch a look of wondering speculation in his eye when it turns upon me. It is all because I will not let him lay out flower-beds in the usual way, and make the bit of ground in front of the house really neat and ornamental. At first he put it down to meanness, but he knows by now that that cannot be the explanation. That I really prefer a garden so poor and plain that every cottager would be ashamed of it, he cannot bring himself to believe, and of course I have long since given up trying to explain myself. The good man probably concludes that too many books and the habit of solitude have somewhat affected what he would call my "reasons."

The only garden flowers I care for are the quite old-fashioned roses, sunflowers, hollyhocks, lilies and so on, and these I like to see growing as much as possible as if they were wild. Trim and symmetrical beds are my abhorrence, and most of the flowers which are put into them—hybrids with some grotesque name—Jonesia, Snooksia—hurt my eyes.

On the other hand, a garden is a garden, and I would not try to introduce into it the flowers which are my solace in lanes and fields. Foxgloves, for instance—it would pain me to see them thus transplanted.

I think of foxgloves, for it is the moment of their glory. Yesterday I went to the lane which I visit every year at this time, the deep, rutty cart-track, descending between banks covered with giant fronds of the polypodium, and overhung with wych-elm and hazel, to that cool, grassy nook where the noble flowers hang on stems all but of my own height. Nowhere have I seen finer

foxgloves. I suppose they rejoice me so because of early memories—to a child it is the most impressive of wild flowers; I would walk miles any day to see a fine cluster, as I would to see the shining of purple loosestrife by the water edge, or white lilies floating upon the still depth.

But the gardener and I understand each other as soon as we go to the back of the house, and get among the vegetables. On that ground he finds me perfectly sane. And indeed I am not sure that the kitchen garden does not give me more pleasure than the domain of flowers. Every morning I step round before breakfast to see how things are "coming on." It is happiness to note the swelling of pods, the healthy vigour of potato plants, aye, even the shooting up of radishes and cress. This year I have a grove of Jerusalem artichokes; they are seven or eight feet high, and I seem to get vigour as I look at the stems which are all but trunks, at the great beautiful leaves.

Delightful, too, are the scarlet runners, which have to be propped again and again, or they would break down under the abundance of their yield. It is a treat to me to go among them with a basket, gathering; I feel as though Nature herself showed kindness to me, in giving me such abundant food. How fresh and wholesome are the odours—especially if a shower has fallen not long ago!

I have some magnificent carrots this year—straight, clean, tapering, the colour a joy to look upon.

GEORGE GISSING

(*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*)

THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze,
To win the palm, the oak, or bays:
And their incessant labours see
Crown'd from some single herb, or tree,
Whose short and narrow-vergéd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all the flow'rs, and trees, do close,
To weave the garlands of repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name.
Little, alas, they know or heed
How far these beauties her exceed!
Fair trees! where'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

What wond'rous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head.
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine.

The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach.
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnar'd with flow'rs, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness.
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates transcending these,
Far other worlds and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was the happy garden state,
While man there walk'd without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises are in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skilful gard'ner drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new!

Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers?

ANDREW MARVELL

MARCH 5, 1904

To stand in a quiet place, surrounded by trunks of beech-trees and stems of firs; to see everywhere the succulent green leaves of "lords-and-ladies," the sturdy green of the early spring spiræa pushing riotously through the crisp carpet of last year's yellow-red leaves; to hear, harmonized in space, the sweet songs of innumerable birds, is to realize that here, in the fulness of consciousness within, is to be found the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Day Book of Melisande

PARADISE

So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her inclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up-grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A Sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verd'rous wall of Paradise up-sprung:
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighb'ring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appear'd, with gay enamell'd colours mix'd;
On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath shower'd the earth; so lovely seem'd
That landscape: and of pure, now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair: now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils.

JOHN MILTON
(*Paradise Lost, Book IV.*)

THE HAPPY VALLEY

Oh ! to see it by moonlight,—when mellowly shines
The light o'er its palaces, gardens, and shrines;
When the waterfalls gleam like a quick fall of stars,
And the nightingale's hymn, from the isle of Chenars,
Is broken by laughs and light echoes of feet,
From the cool shining walks where the young people
meet,—
Or at morn, when the magic of daylight awakes
A new wonder each minute, as slowly it breaks,
Hills, cupolas, fountains, call'd forth every one
Out of darkness, as they were just born of the Sun.
When the spirit of fragrance is up with the day,
From his harem of night-flowers stealing away;
And the wind, full of wantonness, woos, like a lover,
The young aspen-trees till they tremble all over.
When the East is as warm as the light of first hopes,
And day with his banner of radiance unfurl'd,
Shines in through the mountainous portal that opes
Sublime, from that valley of bliss to the world !

Thomas Moore

HOW TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE

By a just dispensation of Providence, it happens that they who are unreasonably selfish, seldom enjoy so much happiness as the generous and contented. Almost all the wicked deviate from the line of rectitude, that they may engross an extraordinary portion of some real or imaginary advantage. Their hearts are agitated in the pursuit of it with the most violent and painful emotions, and their eagerness, apprehensions, and solicitude, poison the enjoyment after they have obtained the possession. The nature of their pleasures is at best gross, sensual, violent, and transitory. They are always dissatisfied, always envious, always malignant. Their souls are bent down to the earth; and, destitute of all elevated and heavenly ideas, *cœlestium inanes*. They have not powers of perception for the sublime or refined satisfactions; and are no less insensible to the tranquil delights of innocence and simplicity, than the deaf and blind to the beauty of colours, and the melody of music.

To the wicked, and indeed to all who are warmly engaged in the vulgar pursuits of the world, the contemplation of rural scenes, and of the manners and natures of animals, is perfectly insipid. The odour of flowers, the purling of streams, the song and plumage of birds, the sportive innocence of the lamb, the fidelity of the dog, are incapable of attracting, for one moment, the notice of him whose conscience is uneasy, and passions unsubdued. Invite him to a morning walk through a neighbouring wood, and he begs to be excused; for he loves his pillow, and can see no charms

in trees. Endeavour to allure him, on a vernal evening, when, after a shower, every leaf breathes fragrance and freshness, to saunter with you in the garden; and he pleads an engagement at whist, or at the bottle. Bid him listen to the blackbird, the nightingale, the woodlark, and he interrupts you by asking the price of stocks, and so forth. As you walk over the meadows enamelled with cowslips and daisies, he takes no other notice, but inquires who is the owner, how much the land lets for an acre, what hay sold for at the last market. He prefers the gloomiest day in November, on which pecuniary business is transacted, or a feast celebrated, or a public diversion afforded, to all the delights of the merry month of May. He who is constantly engaged in gratifying his lust, or in gaming, becomes in a short time so very wise as to consider the study of the works of God in the creation, and the external beauty both of vegetable and animated nature, as little superior to a childish entertainment. How grave his aspect! No Solon ever looked so sapient as he does, when he is on the point of making a bet, or insidiously plotting an intrigue. One might conclude, from his air of importance, that man was born to shake the dice, to shuffle the cards, to drink claret, and to destroy, by debauchery, the innocence of individuals, and the peace of families. Ignorant and mistaken wretch! He knows not that purity and simplicity of heart would furnish him with delights, which, while they render his life tranquil and pleasurable, would enable him to resign his soul at death into the hands of his Maker unpolluted.

Man may indeed be amused in the days of health and vigour with the common pursuits of ordinary life: but they have too much agitation in them for the feeble powers of old age. Amusements are then

required which are gentle, yet healthy; capable of engaging the thoughts, yet requiring no painful or continued exertion. Happy he who has acquired and preserved to that age a taste for simple pleasures. A fine day, a beautiful garden, a flowery field, are to him enjoyments similar in species and degree to the bliss of Elysium. A farmyard with all its inhabitants constitutes a most delightful scene, and furnishes him with a thousand entertaining ideas. The man who can see without pleasure a hen gather chickens under her wing, or the train of ducklings following their parent into a pond, is like him who has no music in his soul, and who, according to Shakespeare, is fit for treasons, murders, everything that can disgrace and degrade humanity. "*Vetabo iisdem sub trabibus, fragilemque mecum solvat phaselum.*" I will forbid him, says Horace on another occasion, to be under the same roof with me, or to embark in the same vessel. Let it operate as an additional motive in stimulating us to preserve our innocence, that with our innocence we preserve our sensibility to the charms of nature. It is indeed one of the rewards of innocence, that it is enabled to taste the purest pleasure which this world can bestow, without the usual consequences of pleasures, remorse and satiety. The man of a bad heart can find no delight but in bad designs and bad actions, nominal joys and real torments. His very amusements are of necessity connected with the injury of others, and with a thousand painful sensations which no language can express.

But the mind of the honest, simple and ingenuous, is always gay and enlivened, like some of the southern climates, with a serenity almost perpetual. Let a man who would form an adequate idea on the different states of the good and bad heart, with respect to

happiness, compare the climate of Otaheite with that of Terra del Fuego, as described by our British circumnavigators.

DR. KNOX

NATURE

WHO can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid its gay creation, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In ev'ry bud that blows?

From *Spring*

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul,
That sees astonish'd, and astonish'd sings!

From *Winter*

JAMES THOMSON



RECOLLECTIONS OF ENGLISH SCENERY

HAUNTS of my youth!
Scenes of fond day-dreams, I behold ye yet!
Where 'twas so pleasant by thy northern slopes,
To climb the winding sheep-path, aided oft
By scattered thorns, whose spiny branches bore
Small woolly tufts, spoils of the vagrant lamb,
There seeking shelter from the noonday sun:
And pleasant, seated on the short soft turf,
To look beneath upon the hollow way,
While heavily upward moved the labouring wain,
And stalking slowly by, the sturdy hind,
To ease his panting team, stopped with a stone
The grating wheel.

Advancing higher still,
The prospect widens and the village church
But little o'er the lowly roofs around
Rears its gray belfry and its simple vane;
Those lowly roofs of thatch are half concealed
By the rude arms of trees, lovely in spring;
When on each bough the rosy tinctured bloom
Sits thick, and promises autumnal plenty.
For even those orchards round the Norman farms,
Which, as their owners marked the promised fruit,
Console them, for the vineyards of the south
Surpass not these.

Where woods of ash and beech
And partial copses fringe the green hill foot,
The upland shepherd rears his modest home;
There wanders by a little nameless stream

That from the hill wells forth, bright now, and clear,
Or after rain with chalky mixture gray,
But still refreshing in its shallow course
The cottage garden; most for use designed,
Yet not of beauty destitute. The vine
Mantles the little casement; yet the brier
Drops fragrant dew among the July flowers;
And pansies rayed, and freaked, and mottled pinks,
Grow among balm and rosemary and rue;
There honeysuckles flaunt, and roses blow
Almost unculturèd; some with dark green leaves
Contrast their flowers of pure unsullied white;
Others like velvet robes of regal state
Of richest crimson; while, in thorny moss
Enshrined and cradled, the most lovely wear
The hues of youthful beauty's glowing cheek.
With fond regret I recollect e'en now
In spring and summer, what delight I felt
Among these cottage gardens, and how much
Such artless nosegays, knotted with a rush
By village housewife or her ruddy maid,
Were welcome to me; soon and simply pleased.
An early worshipper at nature's shrine,
I loved her rudest scenes—warrens, and heaths,
And yellow commons, and birch-shaded hollows,
And hedgerows bordering unfrequented lanes,
Bowered with wild roses and the clasping woodbine.

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH
(*Beachy Head*)

NATURE

At the gates of the forest, the surprised man of the world is forced to leave his city estimates of great and small, wise and foolish. The knapsack of custom falls off his back with the first step he makes into these precincts. Here is sanctity which shames our religions, and reality which discredits our heroes. Here we find nature to be the circumstance which dwarfs every other circumstance, and judges like a god all men that come to her. We have crept out of our close and crowded houses into the night and morning, and we see what majestic beauties daily wrap us in their bosom. How willingly we would escape the barriers which render them comparatively impotent, escape the sophistication and second thought, and suffer nature to entrance us! The tempered light of the woods is like a perpetual morning, and is stimulating and heroic. The anciently reported spells of these places creep on us. The stems of pines, hemlocks, and oaks almost gleam like iron on the excited eye. The incommunicable trees begin to persuade us to live with them, and quit our life of solemn trifles. Here no history, or church, or state, is interpolated on the divine sky and the immortal year. These enchantments are medicinal: they sober and heal us. These are plain pleasures, native and kindly to us.

R. W. Emerson



THE BROOKSIDE

I WANDERED by the brookside,
I wandered by the mill—
I could not hear the brook flow,
The noisy wheel was still;
There was no burr of grasshopper,
No chirp of any bird,
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

I sat beside the elm-tree,
I watched the long, long shade,
And as it grew still longer,
I did not feel afraid;
For I listened for a footfall,
I listened for a word—
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

He came not—no, he came not—
The night came on alone—
The little stars sat one by one,
Each on his golden throne;
The evening air passed by my cheek,
The leaves above were stirr'd—
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

Fast silent tears were flowing,
When something stood behind—
A hand was on my shoulder,
I knew its touch was kind:

It drew me nearer—nearer—
We did not speak one word,
For the beating of our own hearts
Was all the sound we heard.

LORD HOUGHTON

THE GARDEN OF PERFUMES

BECAUSE the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air, than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea, though it be in a morning's dew. Bays, likewise, yield no smell as they grow, rosemary little, nor sweet marjoram; that which above all others, yields the sweetest smell in the air, is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the musk-rose; then the strawberry leaves dying, with a most excellent cordial smell; then the flower of the vines, it is a little dust like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth; then sweet-brier, then wall-flowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlour or lower chamber window, then pinks and gilliflowers, especially the matted pink and clove gilliflower; then the flowers

of the lime-tree; then the honey-suckles, so they be somewhat far off. Of bean-flowers I speak not, because they are field flowers; but those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three, that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water-mints; therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

FRANCIS BACON

THE COTTAGE GARDEN

To every cot the lord's indulgent mind
Has a small space for garden ground assign'd;
Here—till return of morn dismiss'd the farm—
The careful peasant plies the sinewy arm,
Warm'd as he works, and casts his look around
On every foot of that improving ground;
It is his own he sees; his master's eye
Peers not about, some secret fault to spy;
Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known;—
Hope, profit, pleasure—they are all his own.
Here grow the humble chives, and, hard by them,
The leek with crown globose and reedy stem;
High climb his pulse in many an even row;
Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below;
And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste
Give a warm relish to the night's repast;

Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And cluster'd nuts for neighbouring market stand.
Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed-fence rises round some fav'rite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall-stemm'd, and pounced auriculas rise.
Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem, and gaily they agree.
What, though fastidious ears may shun the speech,
Where all are talkers, and where none can teach;
Where still the welcome and the words are old,
And the same stories are for ever told;
Yet there is joy that, bursting from the heart,
Prompts the glad tongue these nothings to impart;
That forms these tones of gladness we despise,
That lifts their steps, that sparkles in their eyes;
That talks or laughs or runs or shouts or plays,
And speaks in all their looks and all their ways.

GEORGE CRABBE

FROM "THE SPANISH GYPSY"

In the screening time
Of purple blossoms, when the petals crowd
And softly crush like cherub cheeks in heaven,
Who thinks of greenly withered fruit and worms?
O the warm southern spring is beauteous!
And in love's spring all good seems possible:
No threats, all promise, brooklets ripple full
And bathe the rushes, vicious crawling things
Are pretty eggs, the sun shines graciously
And parches not, the silent rain beats warm
As childhood's kisses, days are young and grow,
And earth seems in its sweet beginning time
Fresh made for two who live in Paradise.

GEORGE ELIOT

ON THE PLEASURES OF A GARDEN

Not he alone is to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind who makes a useful discovery; but he also, who can point out and recommend an innocent pleasure. Of this kind are the pleasures arising from the observation of nature; and they are highly agreeable to every taste uncorrupted by vicious indulgence. There will always be many in a rich and civilized country, who, as they are born to the enjoyment of competent estates, engage not in business, civil or professional. But the restless mind must either find or make an object. Pleasure, therefore, becomes to the unemployed, a serious pursuit.

Whatever is its essence, and whatever the declaimer may urge against it, pleasure will be sought by all who possess the liberty of election. It becomes then incumbent on the moralist, not only to urge the performance of duty, but to exhibit objects that please without enervating the mind, and gratify desire without corrupting the principles. Rural scenes of almost every kind, are delightful to the mind of man. The verdant plain, the flowery mead, the meandering stream, the playful lamb, the warbling of birds, are all capable of exciting emotions gently agreeable. But the misfortune is, that the greater part are hurried on in the career of life with too great rapidity, to be able to give attention to that which solicits no passion. The darkest habitation in the dirtiest street of the Metropolis, where money can be earned, has greater charms, with many, than the groves of Hagley.

Yet the patron of refined pleasure, the elegant Epicurus, fixed the seat of his enjoyment in a garden. He thought a tranquil spot, furnished with the united sweets of art and nature, the best adapted to delicate repose. And even the severer philosophers of antiquity were wont to discourse in the shade of a spreading tree, in some cultivated plantation. It is obvious, on intuition, that nature often intended solely to please the eye in her vegetable productions. She decorates the floweret, that springs beneath our feet, in all the perfection of external beauty. She has clothed the garden with a constant succession of various hues. Even the leaves of the tree undergo a pleasing vicissitude. The fresh verdure they exhibit in the spring, the various shades they assume in summer, the yellow and russet tinge of autumn, and the nakedness of winter, afford a constant pleasure to a picturesque imagination.

From the snow-drop to the moss-rose, the flower-

garden displays an infinite variety of shape and colour. The taste of the florist has been ridiculed as trifling; yet surely without reason. Did nature bring forth the tulip and the lily, the rose and the honeysuckle, to be neglected by the haughty pretender to superior reason? To omit a single social duty, for the cultivation of a polyanthus, were ridiculous as well as criminal; but to pass by the beauties lavished before us, without observing them, is no less ingratitude than stupidity. A bad heart finds little amusement but in a communication with the active world, where scope is given for the indulgence of malignant passions; but an amiable disposition is commonly known by a taste for the beauties of the animal and the vegetable creation.

The northern countries of Europe are by no means well adapted to the true enjoyment of rural scenery. Our vernal seasons, which the poets celebrate in all the luxuriance of description, are commonly rendered cold and uncomfortable, by the long continuance of an Eastern wind. Our poets borrowed their ideas of a spring from the poets of Italy, who collected theirs from nature. A genial day in April, is among us the subject of general congratulation. And, while the lilac blossoms, and the laburnum drops its golden clusters, the shivering possessor of them is constrained to seek warmth at the side of his chimney. Yet, from the temperature of our climate we derive a beauty unknown in the gardens of a warmer country. Few objects are more pleasing than the smooth lawn; but the soft verdure, which constitutes its beauty, is not to be found in more southern climates. It is certainly true, that the rarity of our truly vernal weather, like that of other delights, increases the pleasure of it; and it is probable, for this reason, that an Englishman, notwithstanding his complaints against his atmosphere, enjoys the pleasures of a

garden in their full perfection. A fine day, says Temple, is a kind of sensual pleasure; but surely it would cease to be such, if every day were fine.

A practical attention to a garden, is by some esteemed a degrading employment. It is true indeed, that pastoral and agricultural manners, if we may believe the dignified descriptions of Virgil, are greatly degenerated. The employments of shepherds and husbandmen are now become mean and sordid. The work of the garden is usually left to a peasant. Nor is it unreasonable to assign the labour, which wearies without amusement, to those who are sufficiently amused by the prospect of their wages. But the operations of grafting, of inoculating, of pruning, of transplanting, are curious experiments in natural philosophy; and, that they are pleasing as well as curious, those can testify, who remember what they felt on seeing their attempts succeed. Among the employments suitable to old age, Cicero has enumerated the care of a garden. It requires no great exertion of mind or body: and its satisfactions are of that kind which please without agitation. Its beneficial influence on health, is an additional reason for an attention to it at an age when infirmities abound. In almost every description of the seats of the blessed, ideas of a garden seem to have predominated. The word Paradise itself is synonymous with garden. The fields of Elysium, that sweet region of poesy, are adorned with all that imagination can conceive to be delightful. Some of the most pleasing passages of Milton, are those in which he represents the happy Pair engaged in cultivating their blissful abode. Poets have always been delighted with the beauties of a garden. Lucan is represented by Juvenal as reposing in his garden. Virgil's Georgics prove him to have been captivated with rural scenes; though, to the surprise of his readers, he has not

assigned a book to the subject of a garden. Our Shenstone made it his study; but, with all his taste and fondness for it, he was not happy in it. The captivating scenes which he created at the Leasowes, afforded him, it is said, little pleasure in the absence of spectators. The truth is, he made the embellishment of his grounds, which should have been the amusement of his life, the business of it: and involved himself in such troubles, by the expenses it occasioned, as necessarily excluded tranquil enjoyment.

It is the lot of few to possess territories extensive and well adapted like his, to constitute an ornamented farm. Still fewer are capable of supporting the expense of preserving it in good condition. But let not the rich suppose they have appropriated the pleasures of a garden. The possessor of an acre, or a smaller portion, may receive a real pleasure, from observing the progress of vegetation, even in a culinary plant. A very limited tract, properly attended to, will furnish ample employment for an individual. Nor let it be thought a mean care; for the same hand that raised the cedar, formed the hyssop on the wall. Even the orchard, cultivated solely for advantage, exhibits beauties unequalled in the shrubbery; nor can the greenhouse produce an appearance to exceed the blossom of the apple and the almond.

Amusement reigns, says Dr. Young, man's great demand. Happy were it, if the amusement of managing a garden were more generally relished. It would surely be more conducive to health, and the preservation of our faculties to extreme old age, were that time, which is now devoted to the dice and to the card-table, spent in the open air, and in active employment.

DR. KNOX

THE GREENHOUSE

Who loves a garden, loves a greenhouse too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty warm and snug,
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle, with unwithering leaf
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal, and Western India there,
The ruddier orange and the paler lime
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
Th' amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours, and the spangled bean,
Ficoides,[1] glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of every leaf, that can endure
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his rude bite,
Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia[2] claims,
Levantine regions these; th' Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria: foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade.

William Cowper
(*The Task*)

[1] Ice-plant. [2] Italy.

THE SHAW

The Shaw, leading to Hannah Bint's habitation, is a very pretty mixture of wood and coppice; that is to say, a tract of thirty or forty acres covered with fine growing timber—ash, and oak, and elm—very regularly planted; and interspersed here and there with large patches of underwood, hazel, maple, birch, holly, and hawthorn, woven into almost impenetrable thickets by long wreaths of bramble, the briony, and the brier-rose, or by the pliant and twisting garlands of the wild honeysuckle. In other parts the Shaw is quite clear of its bosky undergrowth, and clothed only with large beds of feathery fern, or carpets of flowers, primroses, orchises, cowslips, ground-ivy, crane's-bill, cotton-grass, Solomon's seal, and forget-me-not, crowded together with a profusion and brilliancy of colour such as I have rarely seen equalled even in a garden. Here, so soft to the eye, the wild hyacinth really enamels the ground with its fresh and lovely purple; there,

"On aged roots, with bright green mosses clad,
Dwells the wood-sorrel, with its bright thin leaves
Heart-shaped and triply folded, and its root
Creeping like beaded coral; whilst around
Flourish the copse's pride, anemones,
With rays like golden studs on ivory laid
Most delicate: but touch'd with purple clouds,
Fit crown for April's fair but changeful brow."

The variety is much greater than I have enumerated; for the ground is so unequal, now swelling in gentle accents, now dimpling into dells and hollows, and the soil so different in many parts, that the sylvan Flora is unusually extensive and complete.

The season is, however, now too late for this floweriness; except the tufted woodbines, which have continued in bloom during the whole of this lovely autumn, and some lingering garlands of the purple wild veitch, wreathing round the thickets, and uniting with the ruddy leaves of the bramble, and the pale festoons of the briony, there is little to call one's attention from the grander beauties of the trees—the sycamore, its broad leaves already spotted—the oak, heavy with acorns—and the delicate shining rind of the weeping birch, "the lady of the woods," thrown out in strong relief from a background of holly and hawthorn, each studded with coral berries, and backed with old beeches, beginning to assume the rich tawny hue which makes them, perhaps, the most picturesque of autumnal trees, as the transparent freshness of their young foliage is undoubtedly the choicest ornament of the forest in spring. A sudden turn round one of these magnificent beeches brings us to the boundary of the Shaw, and leaning upon a rude gate, we look over an open space of about ten acres of ground, still more varied and broken than that which we have passed, and surrounded on all sides by thick woodland. As a piece of colour, nothing can well be finer. The ruddy glow of the heath-flower, contrasting, on the one hand, with the golden-blossomed furze—on the other, with a patch of buckwheat, of which the bloom is not past, although the grain be ripening, the beautiful buckwheat, whose transparent leaves and stalks are so brightly tinged with vermilion, while the delicate pink-white of the flower, a paler persicaria, has a feathery fall, at once so rich and so graceful, and a fresh and reviving odour like that of birch-trees in the dew of a May evening. The bank that surmounts this attempt at cultivation is crowned with the late fox-glove and the stately mullein;

the pasture of which so great a part of the waste consists, looks as green as an emerald; a clear pond, with the bright sky reflected in it, lets light into the picture; the white cottage of the keeper peeps from the opposite coppice; and the vine-covered dwelling of Hannah Bint rises from amidst the pretty garden, which lies bathed in the sunshine around it.

MISS MITFORD
(*Our Village*)

LOVE OF NATURE

'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
Infused at the creation of the kind,
And, though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of His hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in His works,
And all can taste them: minds, that have been formed
And tutored with a relish, more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city-life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,

The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade or valerian, grace the wall
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's darling? Are they not all proofs
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts the best he may?
The most unfurnished with the means of life,
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct; over-head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And watered duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.
Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
And harmless pleasures, in the thronged abode
Of multitudes unknown; hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame,

I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
I wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wished.

WILLIAM COWPER
(*The Task*)

FROM "INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY"

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn whereso'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more!

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay:
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
Thou happy Shepherd boy!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

RURAL JOYS

HERE in solitude and peace
My soul was nurst, amid the loveliest scenes
Of unpolluted nature. Sweet it was,
As the white mists of morning roll'd away,
To see the mountain's wooded heights appear
Dark in the early dawn, and mark its slope
With gorse-flowers glowing, as the rising sun
On the golden ripeness pour'd a deepening light;
Pleasant at noon beside the vocal brook
To lay me down, and watch the floating clouds,
And shape to fancy's wild similitudes
Their ever-varying forms: and oh! how sweet!
To drive my flock at evening to the fold,
And hasten to my little hut, and hear
The voice of kindness bid me welcome home.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

THE QUESTION

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring,
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets
Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag flowers, purple pranked with white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

IN THE SWEET O' THE YEAR

When daffodils begin to peer,
With heigh! the doxy over the dale,
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,
With heigh! the sweet birds, O, how they sing!
Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The lark that tirra-lirra chants,
With heigh! with hey! the thrush and the jay;
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(*A Winter's Tale: Act IV. Scene 2*)



FROM "THE EXCURSION"

The mountain-ash,
Decked with autumnal berries that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms, yields a splendid show,
Amid the leafy woods; and ye have seen,
By a brook-side or solitary turn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did the youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which Nature's hand
Had bounteously arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering Gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form:
Yet, like the sweet-breath'd violet of the shade
Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame
May find chance-mention on this sacred ground),
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar's genius shone;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit
Whizzed from the stripling's arm! If touched by him,
The inglorious football mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field!
The indefatigable fox had learned

To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration he could lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loath to assault the majesty he loved,
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe,
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious waterfowl, from distant climes,
Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Mere,
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

IN CHILDHOOD DAYS

WE could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it,—if it were not the earth where the same flowers come up again every spring that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat lisping to ourselves on the grass—the same hips and haws on the autumn hedgerows—the same redbreasts that we used to call "God's birds," because they did no harm to the precious crops. What novelty is worth that sweet monotony where everything is known, and *loved* because it is known?

The wood I walk in on this mild May day, with the

young yellow-brown foliage of the oaks between me and the blue sky, the white star-flowers and the blue-eyed speedwell and the ground ivy at my feet—what grove of tropic palms, what strange ferns or splendid broad-petalled blossoms, could ever thrill such deep and delicate fibres within me as this home-scene? These familiar flowers, these well-remembered bird-notes, this sky, with its fitful brightness, these furrowed and grassy fields, each with a sort of personality given to it by the capricious hedgerows—such things as these are the mother-tongue of our imagination, the language that is laden with all the subtle inextricable associations, the fleeting hours of our childhood left behind them.

Our delight in the sunshine on the deep-bladed grass of to-day, might be no more than the faint perception of wearied souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in the far-off years which still live in us, and transform our perception into love.

GEORGE ELIOT
(*The Mill on the Floss*)

PASTORAL SCENES



SONG

Ye shepherds of this pleasant vale,
Where Yarrow streams along,
Forsake your rural toils, and join
In my triumphant song.

She grants, she yields; one heavenly smile
Atones her long delays,
One happy minute crowns the pains
Of many suffering days.

Raise, raise the victor notes of joy,
These suffering days are o'er;
Love satiates now his boundless wish
From beauty's boundless store:

No doubtful hopes, no anxious fears,
This rising calm destroy;
Now every prospect smiles around,
All opening into joy.

The sun with double lustre shone
That dear consenting hour,
Brightened each hill, and o'er each vale
New coloured every flower:

The gales their gentle sighs withheld,
No leaf was seen to move,
The hovering songsters round were mute,
And wonder hushed the grove.

The hills and dales no more resound
The lambkin's tender cry;
Without one murmur Yarrow stole
In dimpling silence by:

All nature seemed in still repose
Her voice alone to hear,
That gently rolled the tuneful wave,
She spoke and blessed my ear.

Take, take whate'er of bliss or joy
You fondly fancy mine;
Whate'er of joy or bliss I boast,
Love renders wholly thine:

The woods struck up to the soft gale,
The leaves were seen to move,
The feathered choir resumed their voice,
And wonder filled the grove;

The hills and dales again resound
The lambkin's tender cry,
With all his murmurs Yarrow trilled
The song of triumph by;

Above, beneath, around, on all
Was verdure, beauty, song;
I snatched her to my trembling breast,
All nature joyed along.

WILLIAM HAMILTON

SHEPHERD'S SONG

We that have known no greater state
Than this we live in, praise our fate;
For courtly silks in cares are spent,
When country's russet breeds content.
The power of sceptres we admire,
But sheep-hooks for our use desire.
Simple and low is our condition,
For here with us is no ambition;
We with the sun our flocks unfold,
Whose rising makes their fleeces gold;
Our music from the birds we borrow,
They bidding us, we them, good morrow.
Our habits are but coarse and plain,
Yet they defend from wind and rain;
As warm, too, in an equal eye,
As those bestain'd in scarlet dye.
The shepherd, with his homespun lass
As many merry hours doth pass,
As courtiers with their costly girls,
Though richly deck'd in gold and pearls,
And, though but plain, to purpose woo,
Nay, often with less danger too.
Those that delight in dainties' store,
One stomach feed at once, no more;
And, when with homely fare we feast
With us it doth as well digest:
And many times we better speed,
For our wild fruits no surfeits breed.
If we sometimes the willow wear,
By subtle swains that dare forswear,
We wonder whence it comes, and fear
They've been at court, and learnt it there.

THOMAS HEYWOOD

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,
Fair linéd slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
As precious as the gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May-morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

CONTENT, A PASTORAL

O'ER moorlands and mountains, rude, barren, and bare,
As wildered and wearied I roam,
A gentle young shepherdess sees my despair,
And leads me o'er lawns to her home.
Yellow sheaves from rich Ceres her cottage had crowned,
Green rushes were strewed on her floor,
Her casement sweet woodbines crept wantonly round,
And decked the sod seats at her door.

We sat ourselves down to a cooling repast,
Fresh fruits, and she culled me the best;
While thrown from my guard by some glances she cast,
Love slily stole into my breast!
I told my soft wishes; she sweetly replied,
(Ye virgins, her voice was divine!)
I've rich ones rejected, and great ones denied,
But take me, fond shepherd—I'm thine.

Her air was so modest, her aspect so meek,
So simple, yet sweet were her charms!
I kissed the ripe roses that glowed on her cheek,
And locked the loved maid in my arms.
Now jocund together we tend a few sheep,
And if, by yon prattler, the stream,
Reclined on her bosom, I sink into sleep,
Her image still softens my dream.

Together we range o'er the slow-rising hills,
Delighted with pastoral views,
Or rest on the rock whence the streamlet distils,
And point out new themes for my muse.
To pomp or proud titles she ne'er did aspire,
The damsel's of humble descent;
The cottager Peace is well known for her sire,
And shepherds have named her Content.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM

PASTORAL OF PHYLLIS AND CORYDON

On a hill there grows a flower,
Fair befall the dainty sweet!
By that flower there is a bower,
Where the heavenly Muses meet.

In that bower there is a chair,
Fringéd all about with gold,
Where doth sit the fairest fair,
That did ever eye behold.

It is Phyllis fair and bright,
She that is the shepherd's joy;
She that Venus did despite,
And did blind her little boy.

This is she, the wise, the rich,
And the world desires to see;
This is *ipsa quae*, the which
There is none but only she.

Who would not this face admire?
Who would not this saint adore,
Who would not this sight desire,
Though he thought to see no more?

O! fair eyes! yet let me see
One good look, and I am gone;
Look on me, for I am he,
Thy poor silly Corydon.

Thou that art the shepherd's queen,
Look upon thy silly swain;
By thy comfort have been seen
Dead men brought to life again.

NICHOLAS BRETON

DESCRIPTION OF ARCADIA

THERE were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows, enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to, by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security; while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping, as though he should never be old; there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing; and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

AND I TOO IN ARCADIA

THEY have wander'd in their glee
With the butterfly and bee;
They have climb'd o'er heath'ry swells,
They have wound thro' forest dells;
Mountain moss hath felt their tread,
Woodland streams their way have led;
Flowers in deepest shadowy nooks,
Nurslings of the loneliest brooks,
Unto them have yielded up
Fragrant bell and starry cup:
Chaplets are on every brow—
What hath stay'd the wanderers now?
Lo! a grey and rustic tomb,
Bower'd amidst the rich wood-gloom;
Whence these words their stricken spirits melt,
—"I too, Shepherds! in Arcadia dwelt."

There is many a summer sound
That pale sepulchre around;
Thro' the shade young birds are glancing,
Insect wings in sun streaks dancing;
Glimpses of blue festal skies
Pouring in when soft winds rise;
Violets o'er the turf below
Shedding out their warmest glow;
Yet a spirit not his own
O'er the greenwood now is thrown!
Something of an under note
Thro' its music seems to float,
Something of a stillness grey
Creeps across the laughing day;

Something dimly from those old words felt,
—"I too, Shepherds! in Arcadia dwelt."

Was some gentle kindred maid
In that grave with dirges laid?
Some fair creature with the tone
Of whose voice a joy is gone,
Leaving melody and mirth
Poorer on this alter'd earth!
Is it thus! that so they stand,
Dropping flowers from every hand?
Flowers and lyres and gather'd store
Of red wild-fruit prized no more?
—No! from that bright hand of morn
Not one link hath yet been torn;
'Tis the shadow of the tomb
Falling o'er the summer bloom—
O'er the flush of love and life
Passing with a sudden strife.

MRS. HEMANS

PASTORAL BALLAD

SINCE Phyllis vouchsafed me a look
I never once dreamt of my vine:
May I lose both my pipe and my crook
If I knew of a kid that was mine!
I prized every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleased me before;
But now they are past, and I sigh;
And I grieve that I prized them no more.

But why do I languish in vain;
Why wander thus pensively here?
Oh! why did I come from the plain
Where I fed on the smiles of my dear?
They tell me my favourite maid,
The pride of that valley, is flown;
Alas! where with her I have strayed
I could wander with pleasure, alone.

When forced the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt at my heart!
Yet I thought—but it might not be so—
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.
She gazed, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu
I thought that she bade me return.

The pilgrim that journeys all day
To visit some far-distant shrine,
If he bear but a relique away
Is happy, nor heard to repine.
Thus widely removed from the fair,
Where my vows, my devotion, I owe,
Soft Hope is the relique I bear
And my solace wherever I go.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE

TWEEDSIDE

WHAT beauties does Flora disclose!
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed!
Yet Mary's, still sweeter than those,
Both nature and fancy exceed.
No daisy, nor sweet blushing rose,
Not all the gay flowers of the field,
Not Tweed, gliding gently through those,
Such beauty and pleasure does yield.

The warblers are heard in the grove,
The linnet, the lark, and the thrush;
The blackbird, and sweet cooing dove,
With music enchant every bush.
Come let us go forth to the mead;
Let us see how the primroses spring;
We'll lodge in some village on Tweed,
And love while the feathered folk sing.

How does my love pass the long day?
Does Mary not tend a few sheep?
Do they never carelessly stray
While happily she lies asleep?
Should Tweed's murmurs lull her to rest,
Kind nature indulging my bliss,
To ease the soft pains of my breast,
I'd steal an ambrosial kiss.

'Tis she does the virgins excel;
No beauty with her may compare;
Love's graces around her do dwell;
She's fairest where thousands are fair.
Say, charmer, where do thy flocks stray?
Oh, tell me at morn where they feed.
Shall I seek them on sweet winding Tay?
Or the pleasanter banks of the Tweed?

ROBERT CRAWFORD

PRAISE OF A COUNTRY LIFE

O HAPPY country life! pure like its air;
Free from the rage of pride, the pangs of care.
Here happy souls lie bathed in soft content,
And are at once secure and innocent.
No passion here but love, here is no wound
But that by which lovers their names confound
On barks of trees, whilst with a smiling face,
They see those letters as themselves embrace.
Here the kind myrtles pleasant branches spread;
And sure no laurel casts so sweet a shade.
Yet all these country pleasures, without love,
Would but a dull and tedious prison prove.
But oh! what woods (and) parks (and) meadows lie,
In the blest circle of a mistress' eye!
What courts, what camps, what triumphs, may one find
Display'd in Cælia, when she will be kind!
What a dull thing this lower world had been,
If heavenly beauties were not sometimes seen!
For when fair Cælia leaves this charming place,
Her absence all its glories does deface.

SIR GEORGE MACKENZIE

THE COUNTRY LIFE

Sweet country life, to such unknown,
Whose lives are others', not their own!
But serving courts and cities, be
Less happy, less enjoying thee.
Thou never plough'st the ocean's foam,
To seek and bring rough pepper home;
Nor to the Eastern Ind dost rove,
To bring from thence the scorched clove;
Nor with the loss of thy lov'd rest,
Bring'st home the ingot from the West.
No; thy ambition's masterpiece
Flies no thought higher than a fleece;
Or how to pay thy hinds, and clear
All scores, and so to end the year;
But walk'st about thy own dear bounds,
Not enving others' larger grounds;
For well thou know'st 'tis not th' extent
Of land makes life, but sweet content.
When now the cock, (the ploughman's horn),
Calls forth the lily-wristed morn,
Then to thy cornfields thou dost go,
Which, though well soil'd, yet thou dost know
That the best compost for the lands
Is the wise master's feet, and hands.
There at the plough, thou find'st thy team,
With a hind whistling there to them;
And cheer'st them up, by singing how
The kingdom's portion is the plough.
This done, then to th' enamell'd meads
Thou go'st; and, as thy foot there treads,
Thou seest a present God-like power
Imprinted in each herb and flower;

And smell'st the breath of great-eyed kine,
Sweet as the blossoms of the vine.
Here thou behold'st thy large sleek neat,[1]
Unto the dewlaps up in meat;
And, as thou look'st, the wanton steer,
The heifer, cow, and ox, draw near,
To make a pleasing pastime there.
These seen, thou go'st to view thy flocks
Of sheep, safe from the wolf and fox,
And find'st their bellies there as full
Of short sweet grass, as backs with wool;
And leav'st them, as they feed and fill,
A shepherd piping on the hill.
For sports, and pageantry, and plays,
Thou hast thy eves and holydays,
On which the young men and maids meet,
To exercise their dancing feet;
Tripping the comely country Round,[2]
With daffodils and daisies crowned.
Thy wakes, thy quintels, here thou hast,
Thy Maypoles, too, with garlands graced;
Thy Morris-dance, thy Whitsun ale,
Thy shearing feast, which never fail;
Thy harvest home, thy wassail bowl,
That's toss'd up after Fox i' th' hole;
Thy mummeries, thy Twelfth-tide kings
And queens, thy Christmas revellings;
Thy nut-brown mirth, thy russet wit,
And no man pays too dear for it.
To these, thou hast thy times to go,
And trace the hare in the treacherous snow:
Thy witty wiles to draw, and get
The lark into the trammel net;
Thou hast thy cock-rood, and thy glade

[1] Cattle. [2] A kind of dance.

To take the precious pheasant made;
Thy lime-twigs, snares, and pitfalls then
To catch the pilfering birds, not men.
O happy life! if that their good
The husbandmen but understood!
Who all the day themselves do please,
And younglings, with such sports as these;
And lying down, have nought t' affright
Sweet Sleep, that makes more short the night.

ROBERT HERRICK

A RURAL PICTURE

Now sober Industry, illustrious power!
Hath raised the peaceful cottage, calm abode
Of innocence and joy: now, sweating, guides
The shining ploughshare; tames the stubborn soil;
Leads the long drain along the unfertile marsh;
Bids the bleak hill with vernal verdure bloom,
The haunt of flocks; and clothes the barren heath
With waving harvests and the golden grain.
Fair from his hand behold the village rise,
In rural pride, 'mong intermingled trees!
Above whose aged tops the joyful swains,
At eventide descending from the hill,
With eye enamoured, mark the many wreaths
Of pillared smoke, high curling to the clouds.
The streets resound with Labour's various voice,
Who whistles at his work. Gay on the green,
Young blooming boys, and girls with golden hair,
Trip, nimble-footed, wanton in their play,
The village hope. All in a reverend row,
Their gray-haired grandsires, sitting in the sun,

Before the gate, and leaning on the staff,
The well-remembered stories of their youth
Recount, and shake their aged locks with joy.
How fair a prospect rises to the eye,
Where Beauty vies in all her vernal forms,
For ever pleasant, and for ever new!
Swells the exulting thought, expands the soul,
Drowning each ruder care: a blooming train
Of bright ideas rushes on the mind,
Imagination rouses at the scene;
And backward, through the gloom of ages past,
Beholds Arcadia, like a rural queen,
Encircled with her swains and rosy nymphs,
The mazy dance conducting on the green.
Nor yield to old Arcadia's blissful vales
Thine, gentle Leven! Green on either hand
Thy meadows spread, unbroken of the plough,
With beauty all their own. Thy fields rejoice
With all the riches of the golden year.
Fat on the plain, and mountain's sunny side,
Large droves of oxen, and the fleecy flocks,
Feed undisturbed; and fill the echoing air
With music, grateful to the master's ear.
The traveller stops, and gazes round and round
O'er all the scenes, that animate his heart
With mirth and music. Even the mendicant,
Bowbent with age, that on the old gray stone,
Sole sitting, suns him in the public way,
Feels his heart leap, and to himself he sings.

MICHAEL BRUCE

AN ITALIAN SONG

DEAR is my little native vale,
The ring-dove builds and murmurs there;
Close by my cot she tells her tale
To every passing villager.
The squirrel leaps from tree to tree,
And shells his nuts at liberty.

In orange groves and myrtle bowers,
That breathe a gale of fragrance round,
I charm the fairy-footed hours
With my loved lute's romantic sound;
Or crowns of living laurel weave
For those that win the race at eve.

The shepherd's horn at break of day,
The ballet danced in twilight glade,
The canzonet and roundelay
Sung in the silent greenwood shade;
These simple joys that never fail,
Shall bind me to my native vale.

SAMUEL ROGERS

FOLDING THE FLOCKS

SHEPHERDS all, and maidens fair,
Fold your flocks up; for the air
'Gins to thicken, and the sun
Already his great course hath run.
See the dew-drops, how they kiss
Every little flower that is;
Hanging on their velvet heads
Like a string of crystal beads.
See the heavy clouds low falling,
And bright Hesperus down calling
The dead night from underground;
At whose rising, mists unsound,
Damps and vapours, fly apace,
And hover o'er the smiling face
Of these pastures, where they come,
Striking dead both bud and bloom.
Therefore from such danger lock
Every one his lovèd flock;
And let your dogs lie loose without,
Lest the wolf come as a scout
From the mountain, and, ere day,
Bear a lamb or kid away;
Or the crafty, thievish fox,
Break upon your simple flocks.
To secure yourself from these
Be not too secure in ease;
So shall you good shepherds prove,
And deserve your master's love.
Now, good-night! may sweetest slumbers
And soft silence fall in numbers
On your eyelids: so, farewell!
Thus I end my evening knell.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

IN BIRDLAND



BIRDS

Birds—birds! ye are beautiful things,
With your earth-treading feet and your cloud-cleaving wings:
Where shall man wander, and where shall he dwell,
Beautiful birds, that ye come not as well?
Ye have nests on the mountain all rugged and stark,
Ye have nests in the forest all tangled and dark:
Ye build and ye brood 'neath the cottager's eaves,
And ye sleep on the sod 'mid the bonnie green leaves;
Ye hide in the heather, ye lurk in the brake,
Ye dive in the sweet flags that shadow the lake:
Ye skim where the stream parts the orchard-deck'd land,
Ye dance where the foam sweeps the desolate strand.
Beautiful birds! ye come thickly around,
When the bud's on the branch, and the snow's on the ground;
Ye come when the richest of roses flush out,
And ye come when the yellow leaf eddies about.
Beautiful birds! how the schoolboy remembers
The warblers that chorused his holiday tune;
The robin that chirp'd in the frosty Decembers,
The blackbird that whistled through flower-crowned June.
That schoolboy remembers his holiday ramble,
When he pull'd every blossom of palm he could see,
When his finger was raised as he stopp'd in the bramble,
With, "Hark! there's the cuckoo; how close he must be!"

William H. Thomson

TO THE CUCKOO

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove;
Thou messenger of Spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear;
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy wand'ring through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts the new voice of spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
The sky is ever clear!
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year!

Oh, could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the spring.

JOHN LOGAN

THE MUSIC OF THE GROVE

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd—
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



ODE TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE! best poet of the grove,
That plaintive strain can ne'er belong to thee,
Blest in the full possession of thy love:
Oh! lend that strain, sweet Nightingale! to me.
'Tis mine, alas! to mourn my wretched fate:
I love a maid who all my bosom charms,
Yet lose my days without this lovely mate;
Inhuman fortune keeps her from my arms.
You happy birds! by Nature's simple laws
Lead your soft lives, sustain'd by Nature's fare;
You dwell wherever roving Fancy draws,
And love and song is all your pleasing care;
But we, vain slaves of interest and pride,
Dare not be blest, lest envious tongues should blame;
And hence, in vain, I languish for my bride;
Oh! mourn with me, sweet Bird! my hapless flame.

JAMES THOMSON

THE MORNING LARK

Feather'd lyric, warbling high,
Sweetly gaining on the sky,
Op'ning with thy matin lay
(Nature's hymn) the eye of day,
Teach my soul, on early wing,
Thus to soar and thus to sing.
While the bloom of orient light
Gilds thee in thy tuneful flight,
May the Day-spring from on high,
Seen by faith's religious eye,
Cheer me with His vital ray,
Promise of eternal day.

James Thomson

THE SKYLARK

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!
Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!
Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

JAMES HOGG

THE SWALLOW

THE swallow, bonny birdie, comes sharp twittering o'er the sea,
And gladly is her carol heard for the sunny days to be;
She shares not with us wintry glooms, but yet, no faithless thing,
She hunts the summer o'er the earth with wearied little wing.

The lambs like snow all nibbling go upon the ferny hills;
Light winds are in the leafy woods, and birds, and bubbling rills;
Then welcome, little swallow, by our morning lattice heard,
Because thou com'st when Nature bids bright days be thy reward!

Thine be sweet mornings with the bee that's out for honey-dew;
And glowing be the noontide for the grasshopper and you;
And mellow shine, o'er day's decline, the sun to light thee home:
What can molest thy airy nest? sleep till the day-spring come!

The river blue that rushes through the valley hears thee sing,
And murmurs much beneath the touch of thy light-dipping wing.
The thunder-cloud, over us bowed, in deeper gloom is seen,
When quick relieved it glances to thy bosom's silvery sheen.

The silent power that brought thee back with leading-strings of love
To haunts where first the summer sun fell on thee from above,
Shall bind thee more to come aye to the music of our leaves,
For here thy young, where thou hast sprung, shall glad thee in our eaves.

THOMAS AIRD

THE GREEN LINNET

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of Spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequester'd nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I mark'd, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perch'd in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;

There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mock'd and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE THRUSH'S NEST

WITHIN a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
That overhung a molehill large and round,
I heard from morn to morn a merry thrush
Sing hymns of rapture, while I drank the sound
With joy—and oft an unintruding guest,
I watched her secret toils from day to day;
How true she warped the moss to form her nest,
And modelled it within with wood and clay.
And by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted over, shells of green and blue:
And there I witnessed, in the summer hours,
A brood of nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

JOHN CLARE

LINES ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN A MORNING WALK IN JANUARY

Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough ;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain :
See aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blithe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank Thee, Author of this opening day !
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies !
Riches denied, Thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away !

Yet come, thou child of Poverty and Care ;
The mite high Heav'n bestow'd, that mite with thee
I'll share.

Robert Burns

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry:
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

• ALFRED TENNYSON

THE WREN

SMALL as thou art, thou gem-like bird!
Yet thou hast made thy nest on high;
And there thy warbling voice is heard,
Singing thy children's lullaby.
Lovely bird! with thy golden crown,
A kind and tender nurse art thou,
Making thy nest of moss and down,
And hanging it on the bending bough.
There, rocked by the wave of the zephyr's wings,
Amid the green branches it lightly swings,
And a few clustering leaves of the forest-tree
Will serve to shelter thy cradle and thee;
Concealing thee safely from every eye,
Until danger and fear have pass'd thee by.

SIR WALTER SCOTT
(*Minstrelsy of the Woods*)

THE HUMMING-BIRD

THE humming-bird! the humming-bird!
So fairy-like and bright;
It lives among the sunny flowers,
A creature of delight!

In the radiant islands of the East,
Where fragrant spices grow,
A thousand, thousand humming-birds
Go glancing to and fro.

Like living fires they flit about,
Scarce larger than a bee,
Among the broad palmetto leaves,
And through the fan-palm tree.

And in those wild and verdant woods,
Where stately mosses tower,
Where hangs from branching tree to tree
The scarlet passion-flower;

Where on the mighty river-banks,
La Plate and Amazon,
The cayman, like an old tree trunk,
Lies basking in the sun;

There builds her nest the humming-bird,
Within the ancient wood—
Her nest of silky cotton down—
And rears her tiny brood.

She hangs it to a slender twig,
Where waves it light and free,
As the campanero tolls his song,
And rocks the mighty tree.

All crimson is her shining breast,
Like to the red, red rose;
Her wing is the changeful green and blue
That the neck of the peacock shows.

MARY HOWITT

THE WOODLAND CHOIR

THE ousel-cock, so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill;—

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer, nay.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(*A Midsummer Night's Dream · Act III. Scene* 1)



THE ROBIN

MERRY, merry sparrow!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Sees you; swift as arrow,
Seek your cradle narrow
Near my bosom.

Pretty, pretty robin!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Hears you sobbing, sobbing;
Pretty, pretty robin,
Near my bosom.

WILLIAM BLAKE



THE ROBIN'S RETURN

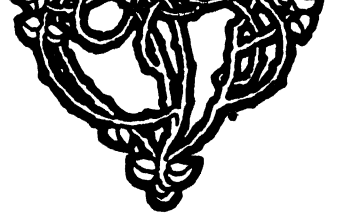
THE return of the robin is commonly announced by the newspapers, like that of eminent or notorious people to a watering-place, as the first authentic notification of spring. And such his appearance in the orchard and garden undoubtedly is. But, in spite of his name of migratory thrush, he stays with us all winter, and I have seen him when the thermometer marked fifteen degrees below zero Fahrenheit, armed impregnably within, like Emerson's Titmouse, and as cheerful as he. There is, I admit, a spice of vulgarity in him, and his song is rather of the Bloomfield sort, too largely ballasted with prose. His ethics are of the Poor Richard school, and the main chance which calls forth all his energy is altogether of the belly. He never has those fine intervals of lunacy into which his cousins, the cat-bird and the mavis, are apt to fall. But for a

that and twice as muckle 's a' that, I would not exchange him for all the cherries that ever came out of Asia Minor. With whatever faults, he has not wholly forfeited that superiority which belongs to the children of nature. He has a finer taste in fruit than could be distilled from many successive committees of the Horticultural Society, and he eats with a relishing gulp not inferior to Dr. Johnson's. He feels and freely exercises his right of eminent domain. His is the earliest mess of green peas; his all the mulberries I had fancied mine. But if he gets also the lion's share of the raspberries, he is a great planter, and sows those wild ones in the woods that solace the pedestrian and give a momentary calm even to the jaded victims of the White Hills. He keeps a strict eye over one's fruit, and knows to a shade of purple when your grapes have cooked long enough in the sun. During the severe drought a few years ago, the robins wholly vanished from my garden. I neither saw nor heard one for three weeks. Meanwhile a small foreign grape-vine, rather shy of bearing, seemed to find the dusty air congenial, and, dreaming perhaps of its sweet Argos across the sea, decked itself with a score or so of fair bunches. I watched them from day to day till they should have secreted sugar enough from the sunbeams, and at last made up my mind that I would celebrate my vintage the next morning. But the robins too had somehow kept note of them. They must have sent out spies, as did the Jews into the promised land, before I was stirring. When I went with my basket, at least a dozen of these winged vintagers bustled out from among the leaves, and alighting on the nearest trees interchanged some shrill remarks about me of a derogatory nature. They had fairly sacked the vine. Not Wellington's veterans made cleaner work of a Spanish town; not Federals or

Confederates were ever more impartial in the confiscation of neutral chickens. I was keeping my grapes a secret to surprise the fair Fidele with, but the robins made them a profounder secret to her than I had meant. The tattered remnant of a single bunch was all my harvest-home. How paltry it looked at the bottom of my basket, as if a humming-bird had laid her egg in an eagle's nest! I could not help laughing; and the robins seemed to join heartily in the merriment. There was a native grape-vine close by, blue with its less refined abundance, but my cunning thieves preferred the foreign flavour.

Could I tax them with want of taste?

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL
(*My Garden Acquaintance*)



SOME BEAUTIFUL INSECTS



THE BEAUTY OF INSECTS

Observe the insect race, ordain'd to keep
The lazy Sabbath of a half-year's sleep.
Entomb'd beneath the filmy web they lie,
And wait the influence of a kinder sky.
When vernal sunbeams pierce their dark retreat,
The heaving tomb distends with vital heat;
The full-form'd brood, impatient of their cell,
Start from their trance, and burst their silken shell.
Trembling awhile they stand, and scarcely dare
To launch at once upon the untried air.
At length assured, they catch the favouring gale,
And leave their sordid spoils and high in ether sail.

Lo! the bright train their radiant wings unfold,
With silver fringed, and freckled o'er with gold.
On the gay bosom of some fragrant flower,
They, idly fluttering, live their little hour;
Their life all pleasure, and their task all play,
All spring their age, and sunshine all their day.
Not so the child of sorrow, wretched man:
His course with toil concludes, with pain began,
That his high destiny he might discern,
And in misfortune's school this lesson learn—
Pleasure's the portion of the inferior kind;
But glory, virtue, heaven for man design'd.

What atom forms of insect life appear!
And who can follow nature's pencil here?
Their wings with azure, green, and purple gloss'd,
Studded with colour'd eyes, with gems emboss'd,
Inlaid with pearl, and mark'd with various stains
Of lively crimson, through their dusky veins.
Some shoot like living stars athwart the night,

And scatter from their wings a vivid light,
To guide the Indian to his tawny loves,
As through the woods with cautious step he moves.
See the proud giant of the beetle race,
With shining arms his polish'd limbs enchase!
Like some stern warrior formidably bright,
His steely sides reflect a gleaming light;
On his large forehead spreading horns he wears,
And high in air the branching antlers bears;
O'er many an inch extends his wide domain,
And his rich treasury swells with hoarded grain.

A. L. BARBAULD

DESCRIPTION OF A BUTTERFLY

HE the gay garden round about doth fly,
From bed to bed, from one to other border,
And takes survey, with curious, busy eye,
Of every flower and herb there set in order;
Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly,
Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,
Nor with his feet their silken leaves deface,
But feeds upon the pleasures of each place,
And evermore, with most variety
And change of sweetness (for all change is sweet)
He seeks, his dainty sense to gratify;
Now sucking of the juice of herbs most meet,
Or of the dew which yet on them doth lie,
Now in the same bathing his tender feet;
And then he percheth on some bank thereby
To sun himself, and his moist wings to dry.

EDMUND SPENSER

THE GRASSHOPPER

Happy insect, what can be
In happiness compared to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine,
The dewy morning's gentle wine!
Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant cup does fill;
'Tis fill'd wherever thou dost tread,
Nature self's thy Ganymede.
Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,
Happier than the happiest king!
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee;
All that summer hours produce,
Fertile made with early juice.
Man for thee does sow and plough;
Farmer he, and landlord thou!
Thou dost innocently enjoy,
Nor does thy luxury destroy.
The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
More harmonious than he.
Thee country hinds with gladness hear,
Prophet of the ripen'd year!
Thee Phœbus loves, and does inspire;
Phœbus is himself thy sire.
To thee, of all things upon earth,
Life is no longer than thy mirth.
Happy insect! happy thou,
Dost neither age nor winter know.
But when thou'st drunk, and danc'd, and sung
Thy fill, the flowery leaves among,
(Voluptuous and wise withal,
Epicurean animal!)

Satiated with thy summer feast,
Thou retir'st to endless rest.

ABRAHAM COWLEY

THE GLOW-WORM

BRIGHT stranger! welcome to my field,
Here feed in safety, here thy radiance yield;
To me, oh, nightly be thy splendour given!
Oh, could a wish of mine the skies command,
How would I gem thy leaf with liberal hand,
With every sweetest dew of heaven!

Say, dost thou kindly light the fairy train
Amid the gambols on the stilly plain,
Hanging thy lamp upon the moisten'd blade;
What lamp so fit, so pure as thine,
Amid the gentle elfin band to shine,
And chase the horrors of the midnight shade?

Oh, may no feather'd foe disturb thy bower,
And with barbarian beak thy life devour!
Oh, may no ruthless tyrant of the sky,
O'erwhelming, force thee from thy dewy seat;
Nor tempest tear thee from thy green retreat,
And bid thee 'mid the humming myriads die!

Queen of the insect world! what leaves delight?
Of such these willing hands a bower shall form,
To guard thee from the rushing rains of night,
And hide thee from the wild wing of the storm.

Sweet child of stillness, 'mid the awful calm
Of pausing nature thou art pleased to dwell,
In happy silence to enjoy thy balm,
And shed through life a lustre round thy cell.

How different man, the imp of noise and strife,
Who courts the storm that tears and darkens life,
Blest when the passions wild the soul invade!
How nobler far to bid these whirlwinds cease,
To taste, like thee, the luxury of peace,
And shine in solitude and shade!

JOHN WOLCOT

TO THE CICADA

HAPPY Cicada, perch'd on lofty branches,
Deep in the forest, cheerful as a monarch,
Tasting the dew-drops, making all the mountains
Echo thy chirping.

Thine is each treasure that the earth produces;
Thine is the freshness of each field and forest;
Thine are the fruits, and thine are all the flowers,
Balmy spring scatters.

Husbandmen fondly dote upon thy friendship,
Knowing thee guiltless of a thought to harm them.
Thee, mortals honour, sweet and tuneful songster,
Prophet of summer.

Thee all the Muses hail a kindred being;
Thee, great Apollo owns a dear companion;
Oh! it was he who gave that note of gladness,
Wearisome never.

Song-skilful, earth-born, mirth and music loving;
Fairy-like being, free from age and suffering;
Passionless, and pure from earth's defilement,
Almost a spirit.

Drunk with the dew-drop, perch'd on twig so lofty,
Noisy Cicada, o'er the wild wave sounding,
Saw-like the feet which to thy side thou pressest,
Drawing sweet music.

ANACREON

BEES

YE musical hounds of the fairy king,
Who hunt for the golden dew,
Who track for your game the green coverts of spring,
Till the echoes that lurk in the flower-bells ring
With the peal of your elfin crew!

How joyous your life, if its pleasures ye knew,
Singing ever from bloom to bloom!
Ye wander the summer year's paradise through,
The souls of the flowers are the viands for you,
And the air that you breathe, perfume.

But unenvied your joys, while the richest you miss,
And before you no brighter life lies
Who would part with his cares for enjoyment like this,
When the tears that embitter the pure spirit's bliss,
May be pearls in the crown of the skies?

ANONYMOUS



THE BEE'S WINTER RETREAT

Go, while the summer suns are bright,
Take at large thy wandering flight,
Go, and load thy tiny feet
With every rich and various sweet;
Cling around the flowering thorn,
Dive in the woodbine's honey'd horn,
Seek the wild rose that shades the dell,
Explore the foxglove's freckled bell;
Or in the heath-flower's fairy cup,
Drink the fragrant spirit up.
But when the meadows shall be mown,
And summer's garlands overblown,
Then come, thou little busy bee,
And let thy homestead be with me:—
There, shelter'd by the straw-built hive,
In my garden thou shalt live,

And that garden shall supply
Thy delicious alchymy;—
There, for thee, in autumn, blows
The Indian pink and latest rose,
The mignonette perfumes the air.
And stocks, unfading flowers, are there.
Yet fear not when the tempests come,
And drive thee to thy waxen home,
That I shall then, most treacherously,
For thy honey murder thee:—
Oh, no!—throughout the winter drear
I'll feed thee, that another year
Thou may'st renew thy industry
Among the flowers, thou busy bee.

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH

FLOWERS, SHRUBS, AND TREES



ON A TASTE FOR THE CULTIVATION OF FLOWERS, AND OF BEAUTIFUL SHRUBS AND TREES

Beauty of every kind is formed to captivate, and there is this peculiar advantage in contemplating the beauties of vegetable nature, that we may permit our hearts to be ensnared by them, without apprehension of a dangerous or a dishonourable servitude. A taste for the beauties of vegetation is the mark of a pure and innocent mind, and, at the same time, one of the best preservatives of purity and innocence. It diverts the attention from the turbulent scenes of folly, and superinduces a placid tranquillity, highly favourable to the gentler virtues, and to the permanency of our most refined enjoyments

I have often been surprised to find those, who possessed a very acute susceptibility of artificial or literary grace, and were powerfully affected by the beauties of a poem, a piece of sculpture, or a painting, not at all more sensible of the charms of a tree, or a flowret, than a common and inelegant spectator. They have dwelt with rapture on a fine description of the Vale of Tempe, they have entered into all the delight which a Shakespeare or a Milton meant to communicate in their enchanting pictures of flowery and sylvan scenes, and yet can walk through a wood, or tread on a bank of violets and primroses, without appearing to be affected with any peculiar pleasure. This is certainly the effect of a superficial judgment; for there is no truth of which philosophers have been longer convinced, than that the realities of nature infinitely exceed the most perfect productions of imitating art.

The beauty of colour, though justly esteemed subordinate to that of shape, is yet found to delight the eye more immediately, and more universally. When colour and shape are united in perfection, he who can view them with insensibility, must resign all pretensions to delicacy of perception. Such an union has been usually effected by Nature in the formation of a flower.

There is scarcely a single object in all the vegetable world, in which so many agreeable qualities are combined, as in the queen of flowers, the rose. Nature certainly meant to regale the senses of her favourite with an object which presents to him at once freshness, fragrancy, colour, and shape. The very soul seems to be refreshed on the bare recollection of the pleasure which the senses receive in contemplating, in a fine vernal morning, the charms of the pink, the violet, the honeysuckle, the hyacinth, the narcissus, the jonquil, the rocket, the tulip, and a thousand others, in every variety of figure, scent, and hue; for Nature is no less remarkable for the accuracy and beauty of her works, than for variety and profusion. Defects are always discovered in the works of art when they are examined with a microscope; but a close examination of a leaf of a flower, is like taking off a veil from the face of beauty. The finest needle ever polished and pointed by the most ingenious artist, appears, when it is viewed by the solar microscope, quite obtuse; while the sting of a bee, however magnified, still retains all its original acuteness of termination. The serrated border of the petal of a flower, and the fringe on the wing of a fly, display an accuracy of delineation which no pencil ever yet could rival. The taste of the florist has not, indeed, been much admired or generally aspired at; while that of the connoisseur in painting, is considered as a mark of elegance of character and an honourable distinction.

Yet, surely, it is an inconsistency to be transported with the workmanship of a poor mortal, and feel no raptures in surveying those highly finished pictures in which it is easy to trace the finger of the Deity.

The poets have given us most luxuriant descriptions of gardens and of rural scenery; and though they are thought by some to have exceeded reality, they have indeed scarcely equalled it. Enter a modern shrubbery, formed of a selection of the most agreeable flowering shrubs, and consider whether there is anything in the garden of Alcinous, in the field of Elysium, in Milton's Paradise, to be compared with the intermixture of the lilac, the syringa, the laburnum, the double-blossomed cherry, peach, and almond; the rubinia, the jessamine, the moss-rose, the magnolia, and a great number of others, less common, but not of greater, though perhaps of equal beauty. As we walk under clusters of flowers, white as snow, tinged with gold, purple as the grape, blue as the expanse of heaven, and blushing like the cheek of youth, we are led to imagine ourselves in fairyland, or in another and better world; where every delicate sense is delighted, and all around breathes fragrance, and expands beauty; where the heart seems to participate in the joy of laughing Nature. Groves and gardens have, indeed, been always supposed to soothe the mind into a placid temper, peculiarly favourable to the indulgence of contemplation.

The excellent taste which now prevails in gardening, usually combines the shrubbery and the grove. The tall trees of the forest constitute the background in the living landscape, and the shrubs beneath and before them, form the underwood, in a delightful resemblance to the natural coppice, and the uncultivated forest. The plane tree is one of the first beauties among those which are most frequently planted in our gardens. Its

large leaf, and permanent verdure render it peculiarly fitted to afford a shade. I always consider it as a classical tree, for the ancient writers often mention it; and some of the finest philosophical dialogues of antiquity passed under the cool retreat of its broad and vivid foliage.

Socrates sought no other theatre than the turf that grew under the plane tree on the banks of the Ilissus. The weeping willow, that droops over the babbling stream, constitutes one of those fine beauties which partake of the melancholy and romantic. Such, indeed, are the charms of its luxuriant branches, that, when properly situated, it is of itself an enchanting picture.

Beautiful as are all the features of the modern garden, I should not hesitate to allot the first place in an estimate of horticultural graces to the weeping willow. The weeping birch is at all times pleasing, and a most delightful object in winter. Observe yonder tall stem, rising from the interstices of a craggy rock, covered with a rind white and glossy like silver, and drooping with ten thousand fine twigs, so attenuated as to appear almost capillary. View it when sprinkled with hoar frost, or with snow, and if you have a soul capable of being charmed with natural beauty, you will be sensibly affected at the sight with a sweet complacency. An old oak is not often found in our gardens because of its tardy vegetation; but whenever it appears in them, it produces all the effect of graceful majesty, and one may contemplate it for hours with still new delight. The delicate acacia, the conical poplar of Lombardy, the flowery chestnut, the soft lime, the elegant mountain-ash, the aspiring fir, the glossy laurel, these all form so various and delightful pictures, that while I am permitted to expatiate over the lawn, and penetrate the mazes of the wood and garden, I shall not repine that it

is not my lot to saunter in the picture galleries of a palace.

The taste for plantation prevails greatly in this country, and it ought to be encouraged, as it is a never-failing source of pleasure to the planter, and of improvement to the community.

But it is to be hoped, that while we plant the tree for ornament, we shall not forget to drop the acorn, and raise that heart of oak, which bears an analogy to the bravery of the people; and has ever been to this land, *et præsidium et decus*, both a bulwark and a beauty.

DR. KNOX

FLOWERS

SPAKE full well, in language quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
As astrologers and seers of eld;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of His love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same universal being
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
Buds that open only to decay;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues
Flaunting gaily in the golden light,
Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
Tender wishes, blossoming at night!

These in flowers and men are more than seeming;
Workings are they of the self-same powers,
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
And in Summer's green-emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing,
In the centre of his brazen shield;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
On the mountain-top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys
Where the slaves of Nature stoop to drink;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers;

In the places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

And with childlike, credulous affection
We behold their tender buds expand;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.

H. W. LONGFELLOW

THE CHARM OF FLOWERS

Flowers seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity; children love them; quiet, tender, contented, ordinary people love them as they grow; luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered: they are the cottager's treasure; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers in whose heart rests the covenant of peace.

Passionate or religious minds contemplate them with fond, feverish intensity; the affection is seen severely calm in the works of many old religious painters, and mixed with more open and true country sentiment in those of our own Pre-Raphaelites. To the child and the girl, the peasant and the manufacturing operative, to the grisette and the nun, the lover and monk, they are precious always. But to the men of supreme power and thoughtfulness, precious only at times; symbolically and pathetically often to the poets, but rarely for their own sake. They fall forgotten from the great workmen's and soldiers' hands. Such men will take, in thankfulness, crowns of leaves, or crowns of thorns—not crowns of flowers.

John Ruskin.
(*Modern Painters*)

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it open'd its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
And the Spirit of Love fell everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast,
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mix'd with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose, like a nymph to the bath addressed,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till fold after fold to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which, drooping as day drooped too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiléd Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

Bût the Sensitive Plant, which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

POPPIES

We are slumberous poppies,
Lords of Lethe downs,
Some awake and some asleep,
Sleeping in our crowns.
What perchance our dreams may know,
Let our serious beauty show.

Central depth of purple,
Leaves more bright than rose,
Who shall tell what brightest thought
Out of darkest grows;
Who through what funereal pain,
Souls to love and peace attain?

Visions aye are on us,
Unto eyes of power,
Pluto's always setting sun,
And Proserpine's bower;
There like bees, the pale souls come,
For our drink with drowsy hum.

Taste, ye mortals, also;
Milky-hearted we;
Taste, but with a reverend care;
Active—patient be.
Too much gladness brings to gloom
Those who on the gods presume.

LEIGH HUNT

LILIES

We are lilies fair,
The flower of virgin light;
Nature held us forth, and said,
"Lo! my thoughts of white!"

Ever since then, angels
Hold us in their hands;
You may see them where they take
In pictures their sweet stands.

Like the garden's angels
Also do we seem,
And not the less for being crowned
With a golden dream.

Could you see around us
The enamoured air,
You would see it pale with bliss
To hold a thing so fair.

LEIGH HUNT

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY

To the curious eye
A little monitor presents her page
Of choice instruction, with her snowy bells,
The lily of the vale. She nor affects
The public walk, nor gaze of mid-day sun:
She to no state or dignity aspires,
But silent and alone puts on her suit,
And sheds a lasting perfume, but for which
We had not known there was a thing so sweet
Hid in the gloomy shade. So, when the blast
Her sister tribes confounds, and to the earth
Stoops their high heads that vainly were exposed,
She feels it not but flourishes anew,
Still shelter'd and secure. And as the storm,
That makes the high elm couch, and rends the oak,
The humble lily spares,—a thousand blows
That shake the lofty monarch on his throne,
We lesser folk feel not. Keen are the pains
Advancement often brings. To be secure,
Be humble; to be happy, be content.

JAMES HURDIS

VIOLETS

Beautiful are you in your lowliness;
Bright are your hues, delicious is your scent,
Lovely your modest blossoms downward bent,
As shrinking from our gaze, yet prompt to bless
The passers-by with fragrance, and express,
How gracefully, though mutely eloquent
Are unobtrusive worth and meek content,
Rejoicing in their own obscure recess.

Delightful flowerets! at the voice of Spring
Your buds unfolded to its sunbeams bright.
And though your blossoms soon shall fade from sight,
Above your lonely birthplace birds shall sing,
And from your clustering leaves the glow-worm fling
The emerald glory of its earth-born light.

Bernard Barton

THE SNOWDROP

Lone Flower, hemmed in with snows, and white as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day
Storms, sallying from the mountain tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend

Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO DAFFODILS

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or any thing.
We die,

As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

ROBERT HERRICK

THE ROSE

How fair is the rose! what a beautiful flower,
The glory of April and May!
But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour,
And they wither and die in a day.

Yet the rose has one powerful virtue to boast,
Above all the flowers of the field;
When its leaves are all dead, and its fine colours lost,
Still how sweet a perfume it will yield!

So frail is the youth and the beauty of men,
Though they bloom and look gay like the rose;
But all our fond care to preserve them is vain,
Time kills them as fast as he goes.

Then I'll not be proud of my youth nor my beauty,
Since both of them wither and fade;
But gain a good name by well-doing my duty;
This will scent like a rose when I'm dead.

DR. WATTS

THE DAINTY ROSE

I WILL not have the mad Clytie
Whose head is turn'd by the sun;
The tulip is a courtly quean
Whom, therefore, I will shun;
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one!

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand;
The wolfsbane I should dread;
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red!

The lily is all in white like a Saint,
And so is no mate for me—
And the daisy's cheek is tipped with a blush,
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom's betrothed to the bee;—
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

THOMAS HOOD

THE ROSE'S ERRAND

I SENT a message by the rose
That words could not convey;
Sweet vows, I never dared to breathe,
And wishes pure as they;
A mute but tell-tale messenger,
It could not do me wrong;
But told the passion I concealed,
And hopes I cherished long.

My love received it with a smile,
She read its thought and sighed;
Then placed it on her happy heart,
And wore it till it died.
Immortal rose! it could not die;
The spirit which it bore,
Lives in her heart as first in mine—
A joy for evermore.

CHARLES MACKAY

STRAWBERRY BLOSSOMS

THAT is work of waste and ruin—
Do as Charles and I are doing!
Strawberry blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them—here are many
Look at it, the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any:
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
Pull as many as you can;
—Here are daisies, take your fill;
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:
Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom;
Only spare the strawberry blossom.

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them;
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind,
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither, soon as spring is fled,
You and Charles and I will walk;

Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise, spare the flower.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE SORREL BLOSSOMS

In hope I climbed the grassy stair,
Green hill in sunshine glancing;
A thousand grasses blossomed fair,
The breezes set them dancing;
Each seemed a happy soul to be,
Rejoicing with the summer:
I smiled to think they danced for me,
And every glad new-comer.

But ah! a rapture greater still,
Behold, my heart awaited,—
It was the self-same grassy hill,
Now wondrously translated!
It seemed that gems had dropped in showers,
The hill with glory lining:
'Twas but a crowd of sorrel flowers,
Through which the sun was shining.

Each little flower with ruby wings,
Moved to a rhythmic measure;
Spell-bound, I watched the lovely things,
As one who finds great treasure.
I danced, I sang, I could not choose
But of their brightness borrow;
I felt as if I ne'er could lose
That joy in any sorrow.

Downcast I took the self-same way,
The summer hardly older,
But oh, how different seemed the day,
To me, a sad beholder!
No light lies on the hill-top now,
No music stirs the grasses;
The very insects seem to know
That some great sorrow passes.

I reached at last the flowery place,
Where late I sat in rapture;
In vain I gazed with wistful face,
No glow could I recapture.
The sorrel flowers were blooming there,
Not one, perhaps, had vanished;
But oh! the cloud of my despair
All grace and joy had banished.

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

FLOWER SYMBOLS

In Eastern lands they talk in flowers
And they tell in a garland their loves and cares;
Each blossom that blooms in their garden bowers
On its leaves a mystic language bears.

The rose is a sign of joy and love,
Young, blushing love in its earliest dawn;
And the mildness that suits the gentle dove
From the myrtle's snowy flower is drawn.

Innocence shines in the lily's bell
Pure as the heart in its native heaven;
Fame's bright star and glory's swell
In the glossy leaf of the bay is given.

The silent, soft, and humble heart
In the violet's hidden sweetness breathes;
And the tender soul that cannot part
A twine of evergreen fondly wreathes.

The cypress, that daily shades the grave,
To sorrow that mourns her bitter lot;
And faith, that a thousand ills can brave,
Speaks in thy blue leaves, forget-me-not.

Then gather a wreath from the garden flowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in flowers.

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL.

OLD TIME FLOWERS

HAUGHTY sunflowers, straight and tall,
Stand upright beneath the wall,
Gorgeous poppies, rich and red,
Flaunt themselves in garden bed.
But for me they've little zest,
Old-time flowers are ever best.

See the quaint sweet columbine,
Always favourite flower of mine,
See the lupins, yellow, white,
Scented flowers of much delight.
And the pansy, oft caressed,
Old-time flowers are always best.

Thyme and rue and herbs of grace
In the heart will e'er have place,
Rosemary and violet blue
Sound both prodigal and true.
Names of plants for ever blest,
Old-time flowers are still the best.

So we'll drink a parting health,
That our gardens may have wealth.
Blooms of flowers as years go round
Springing life-like from the ground.
Then we'll lay ourselves to rest,
Thoughts of old flowers ever blest.

WALTER SMYTH

WILD FLOWERS

Beautiful children of the woods and fields!
That bloom by mountain streamlets 'mid the heather,
Or into clusters 'neath the hazels gather—
Or where by hoary rocks you make your bields,
And sweetly flourish on through summer weather—
I love ye all!

Beautiful flowers! to me ye fresher seem
From the Almighty hand that fashion'd all,
Than those that flourish by a garden-wall;
And I can image you, as in a dream,
Fair, modest maidens, nursed in hamlets small—
I love ye all!

Beautiful gems! that on the brow of earth
Are fix'd as in a queenly diadem:
Though lowly ye, and most without a name,
Young hearts rejoice to see your buds come forth,
As light erewhile into the world came—
I love ye all!

Beautiful things ye are, where'er ye grow!
The wild red-rose—the speedwell's peeping eyes—
Our own bluebell—the daisy, that doth rise
Wherever sunbeams fall or winds do blow;
And thousands more, of blessed forms and dyes—
I love ye all!

Beautiful nurslings of the early dew,
Fann'd in your loveliness by every breeze,
And shaded o'er by green and arching trees,
I often wish'd that I were one of you,
Dwelling afar upon the grassy leas—
I love ye all!

Beautiful children of the glen and dell—
The dingle deep—the moorland stretching wide,
And of the mossy fountain's sedgy side!
Ye o'er my heart have thrown a lovesome spell;
And though the worldling, scorning, may deride—
I love ye all!

ROBERT NICOLL

THE LOVELINESS OF WILD FLOWERS

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies.
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

THERE are few lovelier sights on a breezy summer morning than isolated and closely set clusters of dandelions—tiny "Canary Islands" rising out of great seas of grass, that roll and break in mimic waves upon a yellow beach. Or, to change the metaphor, what is

gayer—when the golden flower-heads grow apart and not in clusters—than on such a morning to see them swinging and swaying upon their tall tubular stalks, and preening their canary plumage, for all the world as if a thousand of those joyous song-birds had suddenly broken cage, and, after the first wild delirious burst of freedom, had perched upon the rocking reed-stalks of river-margining meadows, there to play at see-saw with the wind, and to pour out their hearts in pulsating pæans of praise?

Yet, for all its loveliness, the dandelion is so despised a flower that the milk of its kindness may well have turned bitter and acrid in despair. Rejected here in England from its rightful place in the salad-bowl, and ruthlessly rooted out when it dares to set foot in garden or on lawn, the dandelion comes into the world with a grievance ready made against us. How is a flower, handicapped by a name as harsh as "lion's tooth," to hold its own against rivals upon which such endearing and caressing love-names have been bestowed as Forget-me-not, Ivy, Lily of the Valley, Daffadowndilly, Heartsease, Grass of Parnassus, Traveller's Joy, Star of Bethlehem, Honeysuckle, or Meadow-sweet?

Moreover, the daisy, buttercup, bindweed, violet, and foxglove—some of them less lovely than the dandelion—can boast that they have been counted worthy of cultivation, and can point, in garden and conservatory, to aristocratic relations, fed, watered, and waited on by that Lord of Creation man, who has voluntarily constituted himself their servant, and either himself fetches and carries for them, or else pays some one else to do so. But the dandelion, no one counts worthy of being cultivated or considered. It cannot be because of the dandelion's commonness, for even daisies and buttercups—commonest I suppose of all flowers—esteem them-

selves his superior in the social scale, and possibly patronize the dandelion by lisping allusions to "my garden cousins the bachelor buttons," or "my distinguished relative, the Globe flower." The very children at play in the meadows, weaving daisy-chains and gathering big bunches of buttercups, rarely think the equally beautiful and more fragrant dandelion worth carrying home to stand in a tumbler of water; and when he is old and grey, they make mock of him by pretending he is a clock, and pluck his beflowered pate bald as a mushroom or a mahl-stick, to watch each silver thread borne aloft and away like a fairy parachute.

About the poppy one has many fancies. Never was fine lady gowned more gorgeously than she, and never did fine lady pack so gay a gown into so small a space. She comes to town, clad in plain green travelling dress, and with no luggage other than a green reticule in her hand.

"Dowdy, I call it, my dear!" says one overdressed town-geranium to another.

"Fancy coming to London, and in the season, without so much as a change of frocks! What's that green rolled-up thing she's carrying—a night-dress case?"

"Oh! don't bother me about the fright!" snaps the other geranium; "London's too exhausting in the season for one to be able to think of anything more than one's figure and one's complexion. Mine's hopelessly ruined, I'm sure, and my temper's worse. One has to fulfil one's engagements, and keep in evidence in the social world, I know; but the gravel in this garden is as dry and arid as the desert sand, and we geraniums always get put near the gravel, and in the glare. I'm simply gasping and panting with the heat. If only one of those sprawly country nasturtiums

—common creatures, aren't they? with no idea of 'holding themselves' and quite out of place outside a cottager's garden—would lend me that Japanese sunshade that she calls a leaf!"

By and by the country poppy, that the geranium had called a "fright," opens what the other geranium had taken to be a green nightdress case, and shakes out the loveliest, lightest crimson court-gown of shimmering spun silk that ever was seen away from fairyland; and the two geraniums turn white with envy, and the despised and dowdy poppy queens it regally in the garden.

It is only a single poppy that makes me think of a fine lady in her silken gown. Sometimes one sees a field of ripe and waving corn, as patiently and as peacefully awaiting the coming of the reaper, as full-uddered kine await their milking, or as good Christians whose years are over-ripe, whose race is run, and whose peace is made with heaven, await the calm coming of Death. The scene is so idyllically peaceful that no one would suspect the presence of hidden foes. But as one approaches, and skirts the cornfield's flank, one is alarmed to detect sudden stains and patches of red; and, looking closer, one sees whole regiments of poppies, crouching low, like scarlet-coated soldiers, taking cover among the corn, that they may steal stealthily upon, and surprise, some unsuspecting defenders. At other times when I see a poppy, lifting the crimsoned cup of its chalice high above the heads of the growing corn, that one day will be made into bread, I think of the white and red of the wine-cup and the bread in the hand of our Lord at the Last Supper, and bow my own head in silent prayer.

Then there is the bluebell, azuring our English glades, as the heather purples the heaths of Scotland. Here,

in Sussex, I have seen the bluebells lie so closely together, in the hollows, that one might think our Sussex sea had broken bounds, and overflowed the land in blue lagoons of loveliness.

But, more even than the bluebell, I love the wood-anemone. Every painter dislikes to show his masterpiece merely as a square of canvas, knowing that it is not seen to advantage, lacking the finish and the setting of a frame; and I sometimes think that God, the Great Artist, is so justly and supremely proud of His loveliest miracle and masterpiece of wildflower perfection—the wood-anemone—that He does not wish it to be seen away from its framing of exquisite green.

Plucked primroses, bluebells, and violets, apart from their leaves, look to me like pictures seen without a frame, or like loose jewels and detached gems that have lost something of sparkle and splendour by being taken out of their setting—for primroses, bluebells, and violets have one stalk for the blossoms and another for the leaf. In making a posy, we must first gather our flowers, and then, if we wish our woodland gems, hill-side jewels, or meadow pearls, to be seen in Nature's setting, we must pick or add a framework of green. It is not so with the wood-anemone. Flower and leaf grow upon one stalk. Pluck a wood-anemone, and you have your wild-flower jewel set and complete. Half-way up the "gracile" stalk (it was Rossetti who enriched our language by that flower-like and flower-lovely adjective, so suggestive of exquisite grace and lightness of line and curve) there branch out three delicately fronded leaves, falling away from what I may call the flower's waist and lower limbs, and leaving the flower-bust and flower-shoulders bare—just as the bust and shoulders of the Venus de Milo are left bare by the drapery which falls away from the statue's waist. It is

for this reason, perhaps, that I never see a rose-flushed cluster of wood-anemones, hastily gathering, as it were, with one hand, their green drapery around them, without thinking of wood-nymphs surprised by an intruder, just as they had prepared for a bath, and were standing, hesitating and trembling, before taking a plunge into the cool depths of some still and shaded pool.

COULSON KERNAHAN

TO A WILD FLOWER

IN what delightful land,
Sweet-scented flower, didst thou attain thy birth
Thou art no offspring of the common earth,
By common breezes fann'd!

Full oft my gladden'd eye,
In pleasant glade, or river's marge, has traced
(As if there planted by the hand of taste)
Sweet flowers of every dye.

But never did I see,
In mead, or mountain, or domestic bower,
'Mong many a lovely and delicious flower,
One half so fair as thee!

Thy beauty makes rejoice
My inmost heart—I know not how 'tis so,—
Quick-coming fancies thou dost make me know,
For fragrance is thy voice.

And still it comes to me,
In quiet night, and turmoil of the day,
Like memory of friends gone far away,
Or, haply, ceased to be.

Together we'll commune,
As lovers do, when, standing all apart,
No one o'erhears the whispers of their heart,
Save the all-silent moon.

Thy thoughts I can divine,
Although not utter'd in vernacular words.
Thou me remind'st of songs of forest birds;
Of venerable wine;

Of earth's fresh shrubs and roots;
Of summer days, when men their thirsting slake
In the cool fountain, or the cooler lake,
While eating wood-grown fruits.

Thy leaves my memory tell
Of sights and scents and sounds, that come again,
Like ocean's murmurs, when the balmy strain
Is echo'd in its shell.

The meadows in their green,
Smooth-running waters in the far-off ways,
The deep-voiced forest where the hermit prays,
In thy fair face are seen.

Thy home is in the wild,
'Mong sylvan shades, near music-haunted springs,
Where peace dwells all apart from earthly things,
Like some secluded child.

The beauty of the sky,
The music of the woods, the love that stirs
Wherever Nature charms her worshippers,
Are all by thee brought nigh.

I shall not soon forget
What thou hast taught me in my solitude,
My feelings have acquired a taste of good,
Sweet flower ! since first we met.

Thou bring'st unto the soul
A blessing and a peace, inspiring thought ;
And dost the goodness and the power denote
Of Him who form'd the whole.

WILLIAM ANDERSON

FIELD FLOWERS

Ye field flowers! the gardens eclipse you, 'tis true,
Yet, wildings of Nature, I dote upon you,
For ye waft me to summers of old,
When the earth teem'd around me with fairy delight,
And when daisies and buttercups gladden'd my sight,
Like treasures of silver and gold.

I love you for lulling me back into dreams
Of the blue Highland mountains and echoing streams,
And of birchen glades breathing their balm,
While the deer was seen glancing in sunshine remote,
And the deep mellow crush of the wood-pigeon's note,
Made music that sweeten'd the calm.

Not a pastoral song has a pleasanter tune
Than ye speak to my heart, little wildings of June·
Of old ruinous castles ye tell,
Where I thought it delightful your beauties to find,
When the magic of Nature first breathed on my mind,
And your blossoms were part of her spell.

Even now what affections that violet awakes!
What loved little islands, twice seen in their lakes,
Can the wild water-lily restore!
What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks,
And what pictures of pebbled and minnowy brooks,
In the vetches that tangled the shore!

Earth's cultureless buds, to my heart ye were dear,
Ere the fever of passion, or ague of fear,
Had scathed my existence's bloom ;
Once I welcome you more, in life's passionless stage ;
With the visions of youth to revisit my age,
And I wish you to grow on my tomb.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

TELL-TALE FLOWERS

AND has the Spring's all-glorious eye
No lesson to the mind?
The birds that cleave the golden sky—
Things to the earth resign'd—
Wild flowers that dance to every wind-
Do they no memory leave behind?

Aye, flowers! The very name of flowers,
That bloom in wood and glen,
Brings Spring to me in Winter's hours,
And childhood's dreams again.
The primrose on the woodland lea
Was more than gold and lands to me.

The violets by the woodland side
Are thick as they could thrive;
I've talk'd to them with childish pride
As things that were alive:
I find them now in my distress—
They seem as sweet, yet valueless.

The cowslips on the meadow lea,
How have I run for them!
I look'd with wild and childish glee
Upon each golden gem:
And when they bow'd their heads so shy
I laugh'd, and thought they danced for joy.

And when a man in early years,
How sweet they used to come,
And give me tales of smiles and tears,
And thoughts more dear than home:
Secrets which words would then reprove—
They told the names of early love.

The primrose turn'd a babbling flower
Within its sweet recess:
I blush'd to see its secret bower,
And turn'd her name to bless.
The violets said the eyes were blue:
I loved, and did they tell me true?

JOHN CLARE

DAISY

FRESH-SMITTEN by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness.
And when at dusk, by dews opprest,
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES

I NEVER see a young hand hold
The starry bunch of white and gold,
But something warm and fresh will start
About the region of my heart.
My smile expires into a sigh;
I feel a struggling in my eye,
'Twixt humid drop and sparkling ray,
Till rolling tears have won their way;
For, soul and brain will travel back,
Through memory's chequer'd mazes,
To days, when I but trod Life's track
For "Buttercups and Daisies."

There seems a bright and fairy spell
About their very names to dwell;
And though old Time has mark'd my brow
With care and thought, I love them now.
Smile, if you will, but some heartstrings
Are closest link'd to simplest things;
And these wild flowers will hold mine fast,
Till love, and life, and all be past;
And then the only wish I have
Is, that the one who raises
The turf sod o'er me, plant my grave
With "Buttercups and Daisies."

ELIZA COOK

THE PRIMROSE

ASK me why I send you here,
This firstling of the infant year;
Ask me why I send to you
This primrose all bepearled with dew;
I straight will whisper in your ears,
The sweets of love are washed with tears.
Ask me why this flower doth show
So yellow, green, and sickly too;
Ask me why the stalk is weak,
And bending, yet it doth not break;
I must tell you, these discover
What doubts and fears are in a lover.

THOMAS CAREW

TO A BRAMBLE FLOWER

THY fruit full well the schoolboy knows,
Wild bramble of the brake!
So put thou forth thy small white rose;
I love it for his sake.
Though woodbines flaunt and roses glow
O'er all the fragrant bowers,
Thou needst not be ashamed to show
Thy satin-threaded flowers;
For dull the eye, the heart is dull,
That cannot feel how fair,
Amid all beauty beautiful,
Thy tender blossoms are!
How delicate thy gauzy frill!
How rich thy branchy stem!
How soft thy voice when woods are still,
And thou sing'st hymns to them;
While silent showers are falling slow,
And 'mid the general hush,
A sweet air lifts the little bough,
Lone whispering through the bush!
The primrose to the grave is gone;
The hawthorn flower is dead;
The violet by the mossed gray stone
Hath laid her weary head;
But thou, wild bramble! back dost bring
In all their beauteous power,
The fresh green days of life's fair spring,
And boyhood's blossomy hour.
Scorned bramble of the brake! once more
Thou bidd'st me be a boy,
To gad with thee the woodlands o'er,
In freedom and in joy.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

ON A SPRIG OF HEATH

Flower of the waste! the heath-fowl shuns
For thee the brake and tangled wood—
To thy protecting shade she runs,
Thy tender buds supply her food;
Her young forsake her downy plumes,
To rest upon thy opening blooms.

Flower of the desert though thou art!
The deer that range the mountain free,
The graceful doe, the stately hart,
Their food and shelter seek from thee;
The bee thy earliest blossom greets,
And draws from thee her choicest sweets.

Gem of the heath! whose modest bloom
Sheds beauty o'er the lonely moor;
Though thou dispense no rich perfume,
Nor yet with splendid tints allure,
Both valour's crest and beauty's bower,
Oft hast thou decked, a favourite flower.

Flower of the wild! whose purple glow
Adorns the dusky mountain's side,
Not the gay hues of Iris' bow,
Not garden's artful varied pride,
With all its wealth of sweets could cheer,
Like thee, the hardy mountaineer.

Flower of his heart! thy fragrance mild
Of peace and freedom seem to breathe:
To pluck thy blossoms in the wild,
And deck his bonnet with the wreath,
Where dwelt of old his rustic sires,
Is all his simple wish requires.

Flower of his dear-loved native land!
Alas, when distant far more dear!
When he from some cold foreign strand,
Looks homeward through the blinding tear,
How must his aching heart deplore
That home and thee he sees no more!

MRS GRANT

THE BRIAR

My briar that smelled so sweet,
When gentle Spring's first heat,
Ran through thy quiet veins;
Thou that could'st injure none,
But would'st be left alone,
Alone thou leavest me and naught of mine remains.

What! hath no poet's lyre
O'er thee, sweet breathing briar,
 Hung fondly, ill or well?
And yet, methinks, with thee
A poet's sympathy
Whether in weal or woe; in life, in death might dwell.

Hard usage both must bear,
Few hands your youth will rear,
 Few bosoms cherish you;
Your tender prime must bleed
Ere you are sweet; but freed
From life, you then are prized; thus prized are poets too.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

A FIELD OF BLUEBELLS

UNDER the beeches' ample shade
One hardly sees the sky,
Yet here have thronging bluebells made
Themselves into a firmament
Whose ether is the fragrance spent
Upon this lonely glade.

In lilac-time the wandering wind
Breathes with its faintest sigh.
Lilacs that might be out of mind
They are so out of sight, even so
Here hardly the mid-branches know,
So close the tops are twined,

If heaven be gold and blue, or grey
With ragged rainclouds nigh,
For in their sapphirine array
The bluebells imitate the sky
So frankly that the dumb might cry
For joy to see such joy in May.

NORA CHESSON

BLUEBELLS IN THE SHADE

THE choicest bud in Flora's train let other fingers twine,
Let others snatch the damask rose or wreathe the eglantine,
I'd leave the sunshine and parterre, and seek the woodland glade,
To stretch me on the fragrant bed of bluebells in the shade.

Let others cull the daffodil, the lily soft and fair,
And deem the tulip's gaudy cup most beautiful and rare;
But give to me, oh, give to me the coronal that's made
Of ruby orchids mingled with the bluebells in the shade.

The sunflower and the peony, the poppy bright and gay,
Have no alluring charms for me; I'd fling them all away.
Exotic bloom may fill the vase, or grace the high-born maid,
But sweeter far to me than all are bluebells in the shade.

ELIZA COOK

FLOWERING SHRUBS

YE gentle shades between the trees and flowers,
With you, ye laughing race, I'll deck my bowers.
O that my theme would grant the fond delay,
Nor with too urgent haste forbid my stay!
With what delight my hands each spray should guide
And teach your curling tendrils where to glide!
In woven bowers and roofs, your shoots should grow,
And 'neath your network arch the rivlet flow;

Around yon elm your wedded arms should wind,
Emblem of strength, with gentlest beauty join'd.
You then to whom their lovely pomp is given,
Display with art these charming gifts of Heaven ;
Let ev'ry season have their brilliant bloom,
Their laughing colours, and their rich perfume ;
Let each in turn the well-wrought chaplet wear,
Thus ne'er shall fade the garland of the year ;
But new-born joys shall every season bring,
Each month a bower, and ev'ry bower a spring.

JACQUES DE LILLE

SUNRISE AND SUNSET IN THE WOODS

THE first dawn of day exhibits a beautiful obscurity. When the east begins just to brighten with the reflections only of effulgence, a pleasing progressive light, dubious and amusing, is thrown over the face of things. A single ray is able to assist the picturesque eye, which by such slender aid creates a thousand imaginary forms, if the scene be unknown, and as the light steals gradually on, is amused by correcting its vague ideas by the real objects. What in the confusion of twilight perhaps seemed a stretch of rising ground, broken into various parts, becomes now vast masses of wood and an extent of forest.

As the sun begins to appear above the horizon, another change takes place. What was before only form, being

now enlightened, begins to receive effect. This effect depends on two circumstances—the catching lights which touch the summits of every object, and the mistiness in which the rising orb is commonly enveloped.

The effect is often pleasing when the sun rises in unsullied brightness, diffusing its ruddy light over the upper parts of objects, which is contrasted by the deeper shadows below; yet the effect is then only transcendent when he rises accompanied by a train of vapours in a misty atmosphere. Among lakes and mountains this happy accompaniment often forms the most astonishing visions, and yet in the forest it is nearly as great. With what delightful effect do we sometimes see the sun's disk just appear above a woody hill, or, in Shakespeare's language,

"Stand tiptoe on the misty mountain's top,"

and dart his diverging rays through the rising vapour. The radiance, catching the tops of the trees as they hang midway upon the shaggy steep, and touching here and there a few other prominent objects, imperceptibly mixes its ruddy tint with the surrounding mists, setting on fire, as it were, their upper parts, while their lower skirts are lost in a dark mass of varied confusion, in which trees, and ground, and radiance, and obscurity, are all blended together. When the eye is fortunate enough to catch the glowing instant (for it is always a vanishing scene), it furnishes an idea worth treasuring among the choicest appearances of nature. Mistiness alone, we have observed, occasions a confusion in objects which is often picturesque; but the glory of the vision depends on the glowing lights which are mingled with it.

Landscape painters, in general, pay too little attention to the discriminations of morning and evening. We

are often at a loss to distinguish in pictures the rising from the setting sun, though their characters are very different both in the lights and shadows. The ruddy lights, indeed, of the evening are more easily distinguished, but it is not perhaps always sufficiently observed that the shadows of the evening are much less opaque than those of the morning. They may be brightened perhaps by the numberless rays floating in the atmosphere, which are incessantly reverberated in every direction, and may continue in action after the sun is set; whereas in the morning the rays of the preceding day having subsided, no object receives any light but from the immediate lustre of the sun. Whatever becomes of the theory, the fact I believe is well ascertained.

The incidental beauties which the meridian sun exhibits are much fewer than those of the rising sun. In summer when he rides high at noon, and sheds his perpendicular ray, all is illumination; there is no shadow to balance such a glare of light, no contrast to oppose it. The judicious artist, therefore, rarely represents his objects under a vertical sun. And yet no species of landscape bears it so well as the scenes of the forest. The tuftings of the trees, the recesses among them, and the lighter foliage hanging over the darker, may all have an effect under a meridian sun. I speak chiefly, however, of the internal scenes of the forest, which bear such total brightness better than any other, as in them there is generally a natural gloom to balance it.

The light obstructed by close intervening trees will rarely predominate; hence the effect is often fine. A strong sunshine striking a wood through some fortunate chasm, and reposing on the tuftings of a clump, just removed from the eye, and strengthened by the deep shadows of the trees behind, appears to great advantage;

especially if some noble tree, standing on the foreground in deep shadow, flings athwart the sky its dark branches, here and there illumined with a splendid touch of light.

In an open country, the most fortunate circumstance that attends a meridian sun is cloudy weather, which occasions partial lights. Then it is that the distant forest-scene is spread with lengthened gleams, while the other parts of the landscape are in shadow; the tuftings of trees are particularly adapted to catch this effect with advantage; there is a richness in them from the strong opposition of light and shade, which is wonderfully fine. A distant forest thus illumined wants only a foreground to make it highly picturesque. As the sun descends, the effect of its illumination becomes stronger. It is a doubt whether the rising or the setting sun is more picturesque. The great beauty of both depends on the contrast between splendour and obscurity. But this contrast is produced by these different incidents in different ways. The grandest effects of the rising sun are produced by the vapours which envelop it—the setting sun rests its glory on the gloom which often accompanies its parting rays. A depth of shadow hanging over the eastern hemisphere gives the beams of the setting sun such powerful effect, that although in fact they are by no means equal to the splendour of a meridian sun, yet through force of contrast they appear superior. A distant forest-scene under this brightened gloom is particularly rich, and glows with double splendour.

The verdure of the summer leaf, and the varied tints of the autumnal one, are all lighted up with the most resplendent colours.

The internal parts of the forest are not as happily disposed to catch the effects of a setting sun. The meridian ray, we have seen, may dart through the

openings at the top, and produce a picture, but the flanks of the forest are generally too well guarded against its horizontal beams. Sometimes a recess fronting the west may receive a beautiful light, spreading in a lengthened gleam amidst the gloom of the woods which surround it; but this can only be had in the outskirts of the forest. Sometimes also we find in its internal parts, though hardly in its deep recesses, splendid lights here and there catching the foliage, which though in nature generally too scattered to produce an effect, yet, if judiciously collected, may be beautiful on canvas.

We sometimes also see in a woody scene coruscations like a bright star, occasioned by a sunbeam darting through an eyelet-hole among the leaves. Many painters, and especially Rubens, have been fond of introducing this radiant spot in their landscapes. But in painting it is one of those trifles which produces no effect, nor can this radiance be given. In poetry, indeed, it may produce a pleasing image. Shakespeare hath introduced it beautifully, where, speaking of the force of truth entering a guilty conscience, he compares it to the sun, which

"Fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole."

It is one of these circumstances which poetry may offer to the imagination, but the pencil cannot well produce to the eye.

REV. WILLIAM GILPIN

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL

To the far woods he wandered listening,
And heard the birds their little stories sing
In notes whose rise and fall seem melted speech—
Melted with tears, smiles, glances—that can reach
More quickly through our frame's deep-winding night,
And without thought raise thought's best fruit, delight.

It was at evening,
When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
When imminence of change makes sense more fine
And light seems holier in its grand decline.
The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
Earth and her children were at festival,
Glowing as with one heart and one consent—
Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet warm radiance blent. . . .
The sun had sunk, but music still was there,
And when this ceased, still triumph filled the air:
It seemed the stars were shining with delight
And that no night was ever like this night.
All clung with praise to Jubal: some besought
That he would teach them his new skill: some caught,
Swiftly as smiles are caught in looks that meet,
The tone's melodic change and rhythmic beat:
'Twas easy following where invention trod—
All eyes can see when light flows out from God.

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal,
Music their larger soul, where woe and weal

Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance,
Moved with a wider-winged utterance.
Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong.

GEORGE ELIOT

IN A WOOD

No one, it seems to me, who is not in the possession of a wood all to himself can ever know the fulness of joy. Think of the joy it is to lie with your face down, leaning on your elbows, your closed eyes still filled with the blue of the sky and the silhouettes of branches; or with open eyes, seeing the grasses and leaves and homely flowering creeping things, getting delicious intoxicating whiffs of the damp earth—a most shifting smell—your brain filled with a harmony of pleasant sounds.

First and most lovable, the sound of fluttering wings as a bird flits from bough to bough close to you; then from the neighbouring plough, on the other side of a great hedge, comes a chorus of larks, the rooks from a distant avenue contributing the bass viol to their soprano; the quivering deep baa of sheep, the liquid tinkle of cow-bells, a very distant cock-crow, perhaps the quick panting of a never very distant "puff-puff train," the delicious solos of the birds in your own wood (that at times hide out all other sounds)—birds whose songs are, as the hymn says, "new every morning," though I hear

probably the same songs day after day. How is it that they continue to possess the all-delicious quality of love at first sight, or first sound?

Is there any being in the world who can achieve this variety in unity and this unity in variety, except only that marvellous appeal to our senses and spirit that we call "Nature"?

The Day Book of Melisande

IN THE WOOD

In the wood where shadows are deepest
From the branches overhead,
Where the wild wood-strawberries cluster,
And the softest moss is spread,
I met to-day with a fairy,
And I followed her where she led.

Some magical words she uttered,
I alone could understand,
For the sky grew bluer and brighter;
While there rose on either hand
The cloudy walls of a palace
That was built in Fairy-land.

And I stood in a strange enchantment;
I had known it all before:
In my heart of hearts was the magic
Of days that will come no more,
The magic of joy departed,
That Time can never restore.

That never, ah, never, never,
Never again can be:—
Shall I tell you what powerful fairy
Built up this palace for me?
It was only a little white Violet
I found at the root of a tree.

A. A. PROCTER

BIRKET FOSTER ON THOMSON AND TENNYSON

The following letter was written by Birket Foster to the Reverend John Horne, in answer to a letter of appreciation, which he wrote to the artist, thanking him for his illustrations to Thomson's "Seasons."

DEAR SIR,

I have just returned from the Highlands, where I have been for a month or two. I find your kind letter.

One of the greatest rewards an artist has is the knowledge that he has given pleasure to others. Thomson's "Seasons" was always a favourite of mine, and

I remember the pleasure I had in trying to realise some of the scenes he painted so beautifully in words.

I have been the companion this summer of the great man we have just lost. I was at Freshwater and had many a walk with Lord Tennyson, little thinking the end was so near. In the last walk we had together he said as we were going through a dark clump of trees, "Does it ever strike you as a landscape painter that going through an avenue of trees with light beyond is like passing through the grave into Eternity?"

With many thanks for your kindness in writing to me,

Very faithfully yours,

BIRKET FOSTER

IN SYLVAN HAUNTS

THE woods are all alive to one who walks through them with his mind in an excited state, and his eyes and ears wide open. The trees are always talking, not merely whispering with their leaves (for every tree talks to itself in that way, even when it stands alone in the middle of a pasture), but grating their boughs against each other, as old horn-handed farmers press their dry, rustling palms together—dropping a nut or a leaf or a twig, clicking to the tap of a woodpecker, or rustling as a squirrel flashes along a branch. It was now the season of singing-birds, and the woods were haunted with mysterious, tender music. The voices of the birds which love the deeper shades of the forest are sadder than those of the open fields: these are the

nuns who have taken the veil, the hermits that have hidden themselves away from the world and tell their griefs to the infinite listening Silences of the wilderness, —for the one deep inner silence that Nature breaks with her fitful superficial sounds becomes multiplied as the image of a star in ruffled waters. Strange! The woods at first convey the impression of profound repose, and yet, if you watch their ways with open ear, you find the life which is in them is restless and nervous as that of a woman: the little twigs are crossing and twining and separating like slender fingers that cannot be still; the stray leaf is to be flattened into its place like a truant curl; the limbs sway and twist, impatient of their constrained attitude; and the rounded masses of foliage swell upward and subside from time to time with long soft sighs, and, it may be, the falling of a few rain-drops which had lain hidden among the deeper shadows. I pray you, notice, in the sweet summer days which will soon see you among the mountains, this inward tranquillity that belongs to the heart of the woodland, with this nervousness, for I do not know what else to call it, of outer movement. One would say, that Nature, like untrained persons, could not sit still without nestling about or doing something with her limbs or features, and that high breeding was only to be looked for in trim gardens, where the soul of the trees is ill at ease perhaps, but their manners are unexceptionable, and a rustling branch or leaf falling out of season is an indecorum. The real forest is hardly still except in the Indian summer; then there is death in the house, and they are waiting for the sharp shrunken months to come with white raiment for the summer's burial.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
(*Elsie Venner*)

FOREST JOYS

UNDER the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(*As You Like It: Act II. Scene* 5)

THE PINE FOREST BY THE SEA

WE wander'd to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whisp'ring waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of Heaven lay:
It seem'd as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scatter'd from above the sun
A light of Paradise!

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath
That under Heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own:
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean-woods may be.

How calm it was! the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew,
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seem'd from the remotest seat
Of the wide mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling silent life,—
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that fill'd with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,—
Each seem'd as 'twere a little sky
Gulf'd in a world below;
A firmament of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day—
In which the lovely forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.

There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green wood
The white sun, twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green:
And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

TREES

And forth they pass, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to hear the birds' sweet harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest's dread,
Seem'd in their song to scorn the cruel sky;
Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,
The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop elm, the poplar never dry,
The builder oak, sole king of forest all;
The aspen, good for staves; the cypress, funeral.

The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage; the fir that weepeth still,
The willow, worn of forlorn paramours,
The yew, obedient to the bender's will,
The birch for shafts, the sallow for the mill.
The myrrh sweet bleeding of the bitter wound,
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
The fruitful olive, and the plantain round,
The carver holm, the maple seldom inward sound.

EDMUND SPENSER



THE TREES

I

Now, in the thousandth year,
When April's near,
Now comes it that the great ones of the earth
Take all their mirth
Away with them, far off, to orchard-places,—
Nor they nor Solomon arrayed like these,—
To sun themselves at ease;
To breathe of wind-swept spaces;
To catch the out-flowing rapture of the trees.
Considering the lilies.
—Yes. And when
Shall they consider Men?
(O showering May-clad tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)

II

For now at last, they have beheld the trees,
Lo, even these!—
The men of sounding laughter and low fears;
The women of light laughter, and no tears;
The great ones of the town.
And those, of most renown,
That once sold doves,—now grown so penny-wise
To bargain with forlorner merchandise—
They buy and sell, they buy and sell again,
The life-long toil of men.
Worn with their market strife to dispossess
The blind,—the fatherless,
They too go forth, to breathe of budding trees,

And woods with beckoning wonders new unfurled,
Yes, even these:
The money-changers and the Pharisees;
The rulers of the darkness of this world.
(O choiring Summer tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)

III

For now, behold their heart's desire is thrall
To simpleness,—O new delight, unguessed,
In very rest!
And precious beyond all,
A garden-place; a garden with a wall!
To the green earth! All bountiful to bless
Hearts sickening with excess.
To the green earth, whose blithe replenishments
Shall fresh the jaded sense!
To the green earth the dust-corrupted soul
Returns, to be made whole.
For now it comes indeed,
They will go forth, all they, to see a reed
So shaken by the wind.
Men are no longer blind
To aught, save humankind.
(O mellowing August tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)

IV

The wonder this. For some there are no trees;
Or in the trees no beauty and no mirth:—
Those dullest millions, pent
In lifelong banishment

From all the gifts and creatures of the earth,
Shut in the inner darkness of the town;
Those blighted things you see,
But the Sun sees not at its going down:
Warped outcasts of some human forestry;
Blind victims of the blind,
Wreckt ones, and dark of mind,
With the poor fruit, after their piteous kind.
And if you take some Old One to the fields,
To see what Nature yields
With fullest hands to men already free,
It well may be,
As on some indecipherable book
The Guest will look
With eyes too old,—too old, too dim to see;
Too old, too old to learn;
Or to discern
(Before it slips away)
The joy of such a late half-holiday.
Proffer those starved eyes your belated cup:
They took not up.
Too late, too late, for any sky to do
Brief kindness with its blue.

And what behold they, then?
In the shamed moment, when
Old eyes bow down again?

Down in the night and blackness of the heart,
The drowned things start,
And he recks nothing of the meadow air,
Because of what is There.
Lost things of hope and sorrow without tongue:
The human lilies, spring

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

Out of the ooze, and trodden,
Even as they breathed and clung!
Lost lilies, bruised and sodden;
Lost faces, gleaming there,
Where misery blasphemes the sacred young.
Mute outcry, most, of those
Small suffering hands defrauded of their rose;
Faces the daylight shuns;
Ruinous faces of the little ones,—
Pale witness, unaware.
Starved lips, and withering blood—
O broken in the bud!—
Blank eyes, and blighted hair.
(O golden, golden tree!
Bear yet awhile with me.)

So is it, haply, when
Dull eyes look up, and then
Dull eyes look down again.
Waste no vain holiday on such as these;
For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.

V

For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.
And with what eye-shut ease
We leave them, at the last, for company,
The Tree,
Whose two stark boughs no springtime yet unfurled,
Ever, since time began;
Nor bloom so strange to see:
With His two arms outstretched to fold the World.

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY
(*The Atlantic Monthly*)

THE SYCAMORES

In the outskirts of the village,
On the river's winding shores,
Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
Stand the ancient sycamores.

One long century hath been numbered,
And another half-way told,
Since the rustic Irish gleeman
Broke for them the virgin mould.

Deftly set to Celtic music,
At his violin's sound they grew,
Through the moonlit eves of summer,
Making Amphion's fable true.

Rise again, thou poor Hugh Tallant!
Pass in jerkin green along,
With thy eyes brimful of laughter,
And thy mouth as full of song.

Pioneer of Erin's outcasts,
With his fiddle and his pack;
Little dreamed the village Saxons
Of the myriads at his back.

How he wrought with spade and fiddle,
Delved by day and sang by night,
With a hand that never wearied,
And a heart for ever light,—

Still the gay tradition mingles
With a record grave and drear,
Like the rolic air of Cluny,
With the solemn march of Mear.

When the box-tree, white with blossoms,
Made the sweet May woodlands glad,
And the Aronia by the river
Lighted up the swarming shad,

And the bulging nets swept shoreward,
With their silver-sided haul,
Midst the shouts of dripping fishers,
He was merriest of them all.

When, among the jovial huskers,
Love stole in at Labour's side
With the lusty airs of England,
Soft his Celtic measures vied.

Songs of love and wailing lyke-wake,
And the merry fair's carouse;
Of the wild Red Fox of Erin
And the Woman of Three Cows,

By the blazing hearths of winter,
Pleasant seemed his simple tales,
Midst the grimmer Yorkshire legends
And the mountain myths of Wales.

How the souls in Purgatory
Scrambled up from fate forlorn,
On St. Keven's sackcloth ladder,
Slyly hitched to Satan's horn.

Of the fiddler who at Tara
Played all night to ghosts of kings;
Of the brown dwarfs, and the fairies
Dancing in their moorland rings!

Jolliest of our birds of singing,
Best he loved the Bob-o-link.
"Hush!" he'd say, "the tipsy fairies!
Hear the little folks in drink!"

Merry-faced, with spade and fiddle,
Singing through the ancient town,
Only this, of poor Hugh Tallant,
Hath Tradition handed down.

Not a stone his grave discloses;
But if yet his spirit walks,
'Tis beneath the trees he planted,
And when Bob-o-Lincoln talks;

Green memorials of the gleeman!
Linking still the river-shores,
With their shadows cast by sunset,
Stand Hugh Tallant's sycamores!

When the Father of his Country
Through the north-land riding came,
And the roofs were starred with banners,
And the steeples rang acclaim,—

When each war-scarred Continental,
Leaving smithy, mill, and farm,
Waved his rusted sword in welcome,
And shot off his old king's arm,—

Slowly passed that august Presence
Down the thronged and shouting street;
Village girls as white as angels,
Scattering flowers around his feet.

Midway, where the plane-tree's shadow
Deepest fell, his rein he drew;
On his stately head, uncovered,
Cool and soft the west-wind blew.

And he stood up in his stirrups,
Looking up and looking down
On the hills of Gold and Silver
Rimming round the little town,—

On the river, full of sunshine,
To the lap of greenest vales
Winding down from wooded headlands,
Willow-skirted, white with sails.

And he said, the landscape sweeping
Slowly with his ungloved hand,
"I have seen no prospect fairer
In this goodly Eastern land."

Then the bugles of his escort
Stirred to life the cavalcade;
And that head, so bare and stately,
Vanished down the depths of shade.

Ever since, in town and farmhouse,
Life has had its ebb and flow;
Thrice hath passed the human harvest
To its garner green and low.

But the trees the gleeman planted,
Through the changes, changeless stand;
As the marble calm of Tadmor
Marks the desert's shifting sand.

Still the level moon at rising
Silvers o'er each stately shaft;
Still beneath them, half in shadow,
Singing, glides the pleasure craft.

Still beneath them, arm-enfolded,
Love and Youth together stray;
While, as heart to heart beats faster,
More and more their feet delay.

Where the ancient cobbler, Keezar,
On the open hillside wrought,
Singing, as he drew his stitches,
Songs his German masters taught,—

Singing, with his grey hair floating
Round his rosy ample face,—
Now a thousand Saxon craftsmen
Stitch and hammer in his place.

All the pastoral lanes so grassy
Now are Traffic's dusty streets;
From the village, grown a city,
Fast the rural grace retreats.

But, still green, and tall, and stately,
On the river's winding shores,
Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
Stand Hugh Talkant's sycamores.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THE BEECH TREE'S PETITION

O LEAVE this barren spot to me!
Spare, woodman, spare the beechen tree!
Though bush or flowret never grow
My dark unwarming shade below;
Nor summer bud perfume the dew
Of rosy blush, or yellow hue;
Nor fruits of autumn, blossom-born,
My green and glossy leaves adorn;
Nor murmuring tribes from me derive
Th' ambrosial amber of the hive;
Yet leave this barren spot to me:
Spare, woodman, spare the beechen tree!

Thrice twenty summers I have seen
The sky grow bright, the forest green;
And many a wintry wind have stood
In bloomless, fruitless solitude,
Since childhood in my pleasant bower
First spent its sweet and sportive hour;
Since youthful lovers in my shade
Their vows of truth and rapture made,
And on my trunk's surviving frame
Carved many a long-forgotten name.
Oh! by the sighs of gentle sound,
First breathed upon this sacred ground;
By all that Love has whisper'd here,
Or beauty heard with ravish'd ear;
As Love's own altar honour me:
Spare, woodman, spare the beechen tree!

THOMAS CAMPBELL



THE FOUR SEASONS



WHERE DOST THOU LOITER, SPRING?

Where dost thou loiter, spring,
Whilst it behoveth
Thee to cease wandering
Where'er thou roveth,
And to my lady bring
The flowers she loveth?

Come with thy melting skies,
Like her cheek blushing;
Come with thy dewy eyes,
Where founts are gushing;
Come where the wild bee hies,
When dawn is flushing.

Lead her where, by the brook,
The first blossom keepeth,
Where in the sheltered nook
The callow bud sleepeth,
Or, with a tender look,
Through its leaves peepeth.

Lead her where, on the spray,
Blithely carolling,
First birds their roundelay
For my lady sing—
But keep, where'er she stray,
True love blossoming.

A. H. Hoffman

THE SPRING-TIME MEETING AGAIN

When the apple-blossoms shed
Snow-white flowers on their bed;
When each grove and woodland rings
With its little world of wings;
When the lilies on the spray
Shake their little bells in play;
When the tiny blades of grass
Seem to spring up as we pass,
Ringing with the faintest hum
For every joy that spring has come;
When the graceful willows shake
Their boughs, to kiss the placid lake;
When the utmost heaven is blue,
Emblem of our friendship true;
When it is the glorious spring,
And all nature wakes to sing;
To your English friends, and home,
With the nightingale you'll come.

R. Glynn Vivian

SPRING-TIME

I MIGHT mention all the divine charms of a bright spring day, but if you had never in your life utterly forgotten yourself in straining your eyes after the mounting lark, or in wandering through the still lanes when the fresh-opened blossoms fill them with a sacred silent beauty like that of fretted aisles, where would be the use of my descriptive catalogue? I could never make you know what I meant by a bright spring day. Bright February days have a stronger charm of hope about them than any other days in the year. One likes to pause in the mild rays of the sun, and to look over the gates at the patient plough-horses turning at the end of the furrow, and think that the beautiful year is all before one. The birds seem to feel just the same: their notes are as clear as the clear air. There are no leaves on the trees and hedgerows, but how green all the grassy fields are! and the dark purplish brown of the ploughed earth and of the bare branches is beautiful too. What a glad world this looks like, as one drives or rides along the valleys and over the hills! I have often thought so when in foreign countries, where the fields and woods have looked to me like our English Loamshire—the rich land tilled with just as much care, the woods rolling down the gentle slopes to the green meadows—I have come on something by the roadside which has reminded me that I am not in Loamshire · an image of a great agony—the agony of the Cross. It has stood perhaps by the clustering apple-blossoms, or in the broad sunshine by the cornfield, or at the turning by the wood where a clear brook was gurgling below; and surely, if there came a traveller to this world who knew nothing of the story of man's life upon it,

this image of agony would seem to him strangely out of place in the midst of this joyous nature. He would not know that hidden behind the apple-blossoms, or among the golden corn, or under the shrouding boughs of the wood, there might be a human heart beating heavily with anguish; perhaps a young blooming girl, not knowing where to turn for refuge from swift-advancing shame; understanding no more of this life of ours than a foolish lost lamb wandering farther and farther in the nightfall on the lonely heath; yet tasting the bitterest of life's bitterness. Such things are sometimes hidden among the sunny fields and behind the blossoming orchards; and the sound of the gurgling brook, if you come close to one spot behind a small bush, would be mingled for your ear with a despairing human sob. No wonder man's religion has much sorrow in it: no wonder he needs a suffering God.

GEORGE ELIOT
(*Adam Bede*)

SPRING

MINDFUL of disaster past,
And shrinking at the northern blast,
The sleety storm returning still,
The morning hoar, the evening chill,
Reluctant comes the timid Spring:
Scarce a bee, with airy ring,
Murmurs the blossomed boughs around
That clothe the garden's southern bound:
Scarce the hardy primrose peeps
From the dark dell's entangled steeps:
O'er the field of waving broom
Slowly shoots the golden bloom:
And, but by fits, the furze-clad dale
Tinctures the transitory gale.
Scant along the ridgy land
The beans their newborn ranks expand;
The fresh-turned soil, with tender blades,
Thinly the sprouting barley shades;
Fringing the forest's devious edge
Half-robed appears the hawthorn hedge;
Or to the distant eye displays,
Weakly green, its budding sprays.
The swallow, for a moment seen,
Skims in haste the village green:
From the grey moor, on feeble wing,
The screaming plovers idly spring;
The butterfly, gay-painted, soon
Explores awhile the tepid noon;
And fondly trusts its tender dyes
To fickle suns and flattering skies.

THOMAS WARTON

THE COMING OF SPRING

THE snowdrops shone whitely this morning, like snow in an unnaturally hard and good preservation in summer sunshine; an adventurous bee hummed and industriously sucked what one felt must be cold comfort, from the snowdrop. I could not help wondering whether such clay-cold flowers really had any honey, but the perseverance of the bees—for now there were at least two, or even three—was strong evidence.

It is curious that, though I recognize some notes from day to day, I do not know to what birds they belong. The blackbird's cry is the only unmistakable one to me. A note, of course, is easily recognised when a bird has a single note, and not a song, as some of them apparently have, though, after all, the single note may happen to be the only one in the long repertoire of some songster that I realize as his.

No May day could be warmer, or softer, or more full of characteristic lullaby summer sounds. The only reminder to me that winter has but just been shown the door is the penetrating damp of my earthen couch below the Scotch fir-tree. But having come out in gloves that for size and substance are more suitable to the calendar than the temperature, I presently adapted them to the exigencies of the moment, and sat dry and warm. I also heard something this morning that startled me very much (I wonder if owls cry like that in the daytime). It was something like the agonized cry of an owl in great distress or pain, and it was the most appealing sound I ever heard. Some time after I saw a pigeon winging her slow flight over the heads of the firs; perhaps it was she who gave that pathetic liquid soprano gurgle.

The sun became so hot that I had to put my handkerchief over my ear and cheek to prevent them being scorched. It suggested sunstroke, and I sought for shade; a white butterfly made quite a dress rehearsal of summer.

Have you ever *tasted* the scent of a flower? (I wonder if that is how the nuns thought of conserving violets—a brutal thing to do, I always said.) To-day, while my hands were occupied, I put a purple wild violet between my lips, and made, accidentally, a thrilling and ethereal meal of its scented soul (for its body, remember, was still uninjured). Was it a like accident, occurring to a languid, neurotic nun, that first led to the preserving experiment, and was she disillusioned by the result, as she ought to have been, and did she repent ever after for the sin of adding sugar to the heavenly refinement of its imaginative glamour? When I entered the conservatory on my way into the house, a perfect mass of bees had entered before me, and were furiously buzzing over every flower.

If I go out of the garden to-day, I shall expect the hedgerows to be white with blackthorn, though I know they are not, the gorse yellow with blossom, and all the eager larch in their most obstreperous emerald green.

One expects to-day the violence, the freshness, the impulse of Spring. Do you know the black of the Spring storm-cloud behind the vivid green of some budding tree quite out of tone with it? What wonder! it had been intended for the background of soft blue, with which it was quite in harmony a moment ago. Isn't it Constable who sometimes paints these glittering staccato colours?

Oh, I must ride and ride to-day, and fill myself with

the backwardness of the season and the forwardness of the day, with a million fresh sensations, and take no tablet to set it down!

The Day Book of Melisande

SPRING

A FLUSH of green is on the boughs,
A warm breath panteth in the air,
And in the earth a heart-pulse there
Throbs underneath her breast of snows:

Life is astir among the woods,
And by the moor, and by the stream,
The year, as from a torpid dream,
Wakes in the sunshine on the buds;

Wakes up in music as the song
Of wood-bird wild, and loosen'd rill
More frequent from the windy hill
Comes greening forest aisles along;

Wakes up in beauty as the sheen
Of woodland pool the gleams receives
Through bright flowers, overbraided leaves,
Of broken sunlights, golden-green.

She sees the outlaw'd winter stay
Awhile, to gather after him
Snow robes, frost-crystall'd diadem,
And then in soft showers pass away.

She could not love rough winter well,
Yet cannot choose but mourn him now;
So wears awhile on her young brow
His gift—a gleaming icicle.

Then turns her, loving, to the sun,
Upheaves her bosom's swell to his,
And, in the joy of his first kiss,
Forgets for aye that sterner one:

Old winter's pledge from her he reaves—
That icy-cold, though glittering spar—
And zones her with a green cymar,
And girdles round her brow with leaves;

The primrose and wood-violet
He tangles in her shining hair,
And teaches elfin breezes fair
To sing her some sweet canzonet,

All promising long summer hours,
When she in his embrace shall lie,
Under the broad dome of bright sky,
On mossy couches starr'd with flowers.

Till she smiles back again to him
The beauty beaming from his face,
And, robed in light, glows with the grace
Of Eden-palaced cherubim.

O earth, thy glowing loveliness
Around our very hearts has thrown
An undimmed joyance all its own,
And sunn'd us o'er with happiness.

ANONYMOUS

THE VOICE OF SPRING

I COME, I come! ye have called me long;
I come o'er the mountains with light and song!
Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening earth
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose-stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

I have breathed on the South, and the chestnut-flowers
By thousands have burst from the forest-bowers,
And the ancient graves and the fallen fanes
Are veiled with wreaths on Italian plains;—
But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb!

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

I have looked o'er the hills of the stormy North,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth;
The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the reindeer bounds o'er the pastures free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright where my step has been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a glowing sigh,
And called out each voice of the deep blue sky
From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian clime,
To the swan's wild note by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir-branch into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain,
They are sweeping on to the silvery main.
They are flashing down from the mountain-brows,
They are flinging spray o'er the forest-boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves!

Come forth, O ye children of gladness, come!
Where the violets lie may now be your home.
Ye of the rose-cheek and dew-bright eye,
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly;
With the lyre, and the wreath, and the joyous lay,
Come forth to the sunshine,—I may not stay.

Away from the dwellings of careworn men,
The waters are sparkling in grove and glen!

Away from the chamber and sullen hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth!
Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
And Youth is abroad in my green domains.

The summer is coming, on soft winds borne—
Ye may press the grape, ye may bind the corn!
For me, I depart to a brighter shore—
Ye are marked by care, ye are mine no more.
I go where the loved who have left you dwell,
And the flowers are not Death's. Fare ye well, farewell!

MRS. HEMANS

PABLO'S SONG

IT was in the prime
Of the sweet Spring-time.
In the linnet's throat
Trembled the love-note,
And the love-stirred air
Thrilled the blossoms there.
Little shadows danced
Each a tiny elf,
Happy in large light
And the thinnest self.

It was but a minute
In a far-off Spring,
But each gentle thing,
Sweetly-wooing linnet,
Soft-thrilled hawthorn tree,
Happy shadowy elf
With the thinnest self,
Live still on in me;
O the sweet, sweet prime
Of the past Spring-time!

GEORGE ELIOT
(*The Spanish Gypsy*)

SPRING SHOWERS

THE north-east spends his rage; he now, shut up
Within his iron cave, th' effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
At first, a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky, and, mingling deep,
Sits on th' horizon round, a settled gloom:
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm, that not a breath

Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
Of aspen tall. Th' uncurling floods, diffused
In glassy breadth, seem, through delusive lapse,
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all,
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploring, eye
The falling verdure. Hushed in short suspense,
The plumy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,
And wait the approaching sign, to strike at once
Into the general choir. E'en mountains, vales,
And forests seem, impatient, to demand
The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude. At last,
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow
In large effusion o'er the freshened world.
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard
By such as wander through the forest-walks,
Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves.

JAMES THOMSON
(*The Seasons*)

SPRING IN IRELAND

THE sea of Spring, with curling combs
And golden glooms—
A tide of green that breaks and foams
In leaves and blooms.

On heart and soul grave deep and fast
This splash sublime,
Whose memoried radiance shall outlast
The doom of time:

And through eternities unseen
For light suffice—
Because there may not be this green
In Paradise.

ETHEL ROLT WHEELER

SUMMER

I'm coming along with a bounding pace,
To finish the work that spring begun;
I've left them all with a brighter face,
The flowers in the vales through which I've run.

I have hung festoons from laburnum-trees,
And clothed the lilac, the birch, and broom;
I've waken'd the sound of humming bees,
And deck'd all nature in brighter bloom.

I've roused the laugh of the playful child,
And tired it out in the sunny noon;
All nature at my approach hath smiled,
And I've made fond lovers seek the moon.

For this is my life, my glorious reign,
And I'll queen it well in my leafy bower;
All shall be bright in my rich domain;
I'm queen of the leaf, the bud, and the flower.

And I'll reign in triumph till autumn time
Shall conquer my green and verdant pride;
Then I'll hie me to another clime,
Till I'm called again as a sunny bride.

ANONYMOUS

THE BEAUTIES OF SUMMER

THE Summer! the Summer! the exquisite time
Of the red rose's blush, and the nightingale's chime;
The chant of the lark, and the boom of the bee,—
The season of brightness, and beauty, and glee!
It is here—it is here! it is lighting again,
With sun-braided smiles, the deep heart of the glen;
It is touching the mountain and tinging the hill,
And dimpling the face of the low-laughing rill;
It is flooding the forest-trees richly with bloom!
And flinging gold showers in the lap of the broom!
I have heard the lark warble his hymn in the sky,
I have seen the dew-tear in the meek daisy's eye;
I have scented the breath of the fresh-open'd flowers,
I have pluck'd a rich garland from bright hawthorn bowers;
My footsteps have been where the violet sleeps,
And where arches of eglantine hang from the steeps;
I have startled the linnet from thickets of shade,
And roused the fleet stag as he bask'd in the glade;
And my spirit is blithe—as a rivulet clear,
For the Summer, the golden-crown'd Summer, is here

JOHN HOUSEMAN

SUMMER MORNING

'Tis sweet to meet the morning breeze,
Or list the giggling of the brook ;
Or, stretched beneath the shade of trees,
Peruse and pause on nature's book,

When nature every sweet prepares
To entertain our wished delay—
The images which morning wears,
The wakening charms of early day !

Now let me tread the meadow paths,
Where glittering dew the ground illumes,
As sprinkled o'er the withering swaths
Their moisture shrinks in sweet perfumes,

And hear the beetle sound his horn,
And hear the skylark whistling nigh,
Sprung from his bed of tufted corn,
A hailing minstrel in the sky.

First sunbeam, calling night away
To see how sweet thy summons seems
Split by the willow's wavy gray,
And sweetly dancing on the streams.

How fine the spider's web is spun,
Unnoticéd to vulgar eyes !
Its silk thread glittering in the sun
Art's bungling vanity defies.

Roaming while the dewy fields
'Neath their morning burthen lean,
While its crop my searches shields,
Sweet I scent the blossomed bean.

Making oft remarking stops;
Watching tiny nameless things
Climb the grass's spiry tops
Ere they try their gauzy wings.

So emerging into light,
From the ignorant and vain
Fearful genius takes her flight,
Skimming o'er the lowly plain.

JOHN CLARE



THE BEAUTY OF A SUMMER MORNING

THE morning hath not lost her virgin blush,
Nor step, but mine, soil'd the earth's tinsell'd robe.
How full of heaven this solitude appears,
This healthful comfort of the happy swain;
Who from his hard but peaceful bed roused up,
In's morning exercise saluted is
By a full quire of feather'd choristers,
Wedding their notes to the enamour'd air!
Here Nature in her unaffected dress
Plaited with valleys, and emboss'd with hills
Enchas'd with silver streams, and fring'd with woods,
Sits lovely in her native russet.

WILLIAM CHAMBERLAYNE
(*Love's Victory*)

A MORNING LANDSCAPE

EVEN now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are borne.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tower.

JAMES BEATTIE



JULY

Skies of the deepest fairy blue,
Grass of a tender green,
Sand and stones and a glittering sea,
Pools where the tide has been.
Sea-breezes blowing soft and cool,
Freshest of summer air,
Sweet with the touch of bygone Spring
Spreading Life everywhere.
Sea-birds, flashes of silver light
Over the restless sea,
Everything basking in warmth and peace,
Living and glad and free.

Rachel Monson

THE OLD GREEN LANE

'Twas the very merry summer time
That garlands hills and dales,
And the south wind rung a fairy chime
Upon the foxglove bells:
The cuckoo stood on the lady birch
To bid her last good-bye—
The lark sprung over the village church,
And whistled to the sky;
And we had come from the harvest sheaves,
A blithe and tawny train,
And tracked our paths with poppy leaves
Along the old green lane.

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

'Twas a pleasant way on a sunny day,
And we were a happy set,
And we idly bent where the streamlet went
To get our fingers wet;
With the dog-rose there, and the orchis there,
And the woodbine twining through,
With the broad trees meeting everywhere,
And the grass still dank with dew.
Ah! we all forgot, in that blissful spot,
The names of care and pain,
As we lay on the bank by the shepherd's cot,
To rest in the old green lane.

Oh, days gone by! I can but sigh
As I think on that rich hour,
When my heart in its glee but seemed to be
Another wood-side flower;
For though the trees be still as fair,
And the wild bloom still as gay—
Though the south wind sends as sweet an air,
And heaven as bright a day!
Yet the merry set are far and wide,
And we ne'er shall meet again,
We shall never ramble side by side
Along that green old lane.

ELIZA COOK

SUMMER DAYS

In summer, when the days were long,
We walk'd together in the wood:
Our heart was light, our step was strong,
Sweet flutterings were there in our blood,
In summer, when the days were long.

We stray'd from morn till evening came;
We gather'd flowers, and wove us crowns;
We walk'd 'mid poppies red as flame,
Or sat upon the yellow downs;
And always wish'd our life the same.

In summer, when the days were long,
We leap'd the hedgerow, cross'd the brook!
And still her voice flow'd forth in song.
Or else she read some graceful book,
In summer, when the days were long.

And then we sat beneath the trees,
With shadows lessening in the noon;
And, in the sunlight and the breeze,
We feasted, many a gorgeous June,
While larks were singing o'er the leas.

In summer, when the days were long,
On dainty chicken, snow-white bread,
We feasted, with no grace but song.
We pluck'd wild strawberries ripe and red.
In summer, when the days were long.

We loved, and yet we knew it not,
For loving seem'd like breathing then;
We found a heaven in every spot;
Saw angels, too, in all good men;
And dream'd of God in grove and grot.

In summer, when the days are long,
Alone I wander, muse alone;
I see her not; but that old song
Under the fragrant wind is blown,
In summer, when the days are long.

Alone I wander in the wood:
But one fair spirit hears my sighs;
And half I see, so glad and good,
The honest daylight of her eyes,
That charm'd me under earlier skies.

In summer, when the days are long,
I love her as we loved of old;
My heart is light, my step is strong,
For love brings back those hours of gold,
In summer, when the days are long.

ANONYMOUS

AUTUMN

Oh, welcome to the corn-clad slope,
And to the laden tree,
Thou promised autumn—for the hope
Of nations turn'd to thee,
Through all the hours of splendour past,
With summer's bright career—
And we see thee on thy throne at last,
Crown'd monarch of the year!

Thou comest with thy gorgeous flowers
That make the roses dim,
With morning mists and sunny hours
And wild birds' harvest hymn;
Thou comest with the might of floods,
The glow of moonlit skies,
And the glory flung on fading woods
Of thousand mingled dyes!

But never seem'd thy steps so bright
On Europe's ancient shore,
Since faded from the poet's sight
That golden age of yore;
For early harvest-home hath pour'd
Its gladness on the earth,
And the joy that lights the princely board
Hath reach'd the peasant's hearth.

O Thou, whose silent bounty flows
To bless the sower's art,
With gifts that ever claim from us
The harvests of the heart—

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

If thus Thy goodness crown the year,
What shall the glory be,
When all Thy harvest, whitening here,
Is gather'd home to Thee!

FRANCES BROWNE

AUTUMN

THE tedded hay, the first fruits of the soil,
The tedded hay and corn-sheaves in one field,
Show summer gone, eye come. The foxglove tall
Sheds its loose purple bells, or in the gust,
Or when it bends beneath the upspringing lark,
Or mountain-finch alighting. And the rose
(In vain the darling of successful love)
Stands like some boasted beauty of past years,
The thorns remaining, and the flowers all gone.
Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk
By rivulet, or spring, or wet roadside,
That blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,
Hope's gentle gem, the sweet forget-me-not!

S. T. COLERIDGE

AN AUTUMN DAY

THE silver water, the bright gold and red and copper leaves, the mass of bough tendrils like waving, drooping hair, the malachite green of the meadow making a cool, clear background for the gold and copper. Then the warmer green of the lawn this side of the river, showered over with clean-cut, shapely leaves in flat colours of russet and lemon. The tree with its lighter veil of leaves, and their decided shapes and colours, remind me much of a vine. I suppose the shape and colour of the plane-tree leaf is very much like it. The transparency of the leaves of the tree, with the light through them, and the opaqueness of the leaf on the ground, with no light behind it, is very noticeable.

The Day Book of Melisande

A SONG OF HOPE

ROBIN! in the leafy wood
Piping loud and oft,
Robin! by the meadow brook,
In the apple-croft,
Trilling low and soft:
Tell us why such songs you sing—
Are you calling back the Spring?
Dreary Winter first must come
When the birds are dumb.

Slow between its grassy banks
Runs the silver Team.
And a few late Autumn flowers
Droop their heads and seem
In a golden dream :
Swallows flit from cottage eaves,
Sadly fall the dying leaves,
Only you are gay and strong,
Singing all day long!

Piped the Robin lustily,
"All things show God's praise
When the Earth is young and glad
In a thousand ways;
But in darker days,
Lest of music there should lack,
Robins never turn their back,
Each puts on his scarlet vest,
Carolling his best!

"When the glistening snowflakes fall,
When the flowers are dead,
Ere the gallant Crocus dares
Lift his royal head,
I shall come instead!
Singing softly in your ear,
Songs of precious things and dear—
Fuller life and fairer scope,
And fresh Springs of Hope!"

CHRISTIAN BURKE

SKETCHES OF AUTUMN

It was a fair and mild autumnal sky,
And earth's ripe treasures met the admiring eye,
As a rich beauty when her bloom is lost,
Appears with more magnificence and cost:
The wet and heavy grass, where feet had strayed,
Not yet erect, the wanderer's way betrayed;
Showers of the night had swelled the deepening rill,
The morning breeze had urged the quickening mill;
Assembled rooks had winged their seaward flight,
By the same passage to return at night,
While proudly o'er them hung the steady kite,
Then turned them back, and left the noisy throng,
Nor deigned to know them as he sailed along.
Long yellow leaves, from osiers, strewed around,
Choked the dull stream, and hushed its feeble sound,
While the dead foliage dropt from loftier trees,
Our squire beheld not with his wonted ease;
But to his own reflections made reply,
And said aloud, "Yes; doubtless we must die."
"We must," said Richard; and we would not live
To feel what dotage and decay will give;
But we yet taste whatever we behold;
The morn is lovely, though the air is cold:
There is delicious quiet in this scene,
At once so rich, so varied, so serene;
Sounds, too, delight us—each discordant tone
Thus mingled please, that fail to please alone;
This hollow wind, this rustling of the brook,
The farm-yard noise, the woodman at yon oak—
See, the axe falls!—now listen to the stroke:
That gun itself, that murders all this peace,
Adds to the charm, because it soon must cease.

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf:
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roared with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods:
All green was vanished save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

GEORGE CRABBE

AN AUTUMN SONG

THE road was long and dreary, and my heart was sore oppressed,
Yet ever must I hasten on, nor pause for any rest;
For many miles I had to go, and short the autumn day:
But merrily the robins sang to cheer me on my way.

No sunshine lay upon the hills or fields as I passed by;
And pitchy-black the pine-tops showed against the dull grey sky;
And darkness stretched before me and darkness lay behind:
But evermore the robins sang, and cheered my fainting mind.

No other birds were singing in the woods or wayside trees;
The wind surged in the branches like the sound of troubled seas;
So lone was I, so weary, my heart was like to break:
But blithely sang the robins, and it seemed for my sad sake.

How often since, in happier times, more rapturous strains I've heard,
Of nightingales and thrushes and many a poets' bird,
But all my life that song will seem the sweetest to my ear,
That cheerily the robins sang when all the land was drear!

They sang when first I started, they were singing all the way,
On black-fringed ash, on holly bough, on birchen, silver grey;
They made me weep, they made me smile, they made me hope again,
When joy had died within me and life was only pain.

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

THE DEPARTURE OF AUTUMN

Autumn departs—but still his mantle's fold
Rests on the groves of noble Somerville,
Beneath a shroud of russet dropped with gold
Tweed and his tributaries mingle still;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper sounds the rill,
Yet lingering notes of sylvan music swell,
The deep-toned cushat, and the red-breast shrill;
And yet some tints of summer splendour tell
When the broad sun sinks down on Ettrick's western fell.

Autumn departs—from Gala's fields no more
Come rural sounds our kindred banks to cheer;
Blent with the stream, and gale that wafts it o'er,
No more the distant reaper's mirth we hear.
The last blithe shout hath died upon our ear,
And harvest-home hath hush'd the clanging wain,
On the waste hill no forms of life appear,
Save where, sad laggard of the autumnal train,
Some age-struck wand'rer gleans few ears of scatter'd grain.

Deem'st thou these sadden'd scenes have pleasure still;
Lov'st thou through autumn's fading realms to stray,
To see the heath-flower wither'd on the hill,
To listen to the wood's expiring lay,
To note the red leaf shivering on the spray,
To mark the last bright tints the mountain stain,
On the waste fields to trace the gleaner's way,
And moralise on mortal joy and pain?
Oh! if such scenes thou lov'st, scorn not the minstrel strain.

No! do not scorn although its hoarser note
Scarce with the cushat's homely song can vie;
Though faint its beauties as the tints remote,
That gleam through mist on autumn's evening sky,
And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry,
When wild November hath his bugle wound;
Nor mock my toil—a lonely gleaner I,
Through fields time-wasted, on sad inquest bound,
Where happier bards of yore have richer harvest found.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

APPROACHING WINTER

YESTERDAY I passed by an elm avenue, leading to a beautiful old house. The road between the trees was covered in all its length and breadth with fallen leaves—a carpet of pale gold. Further on, I came to a plantation, mostly of larches; it shone in the richest aureate hue, with here and there a splash of blood-red, which was a young beech in its moment of autumnal glory.

I looked at an alder, laden with brown catkins, its blunt foliage stained with innumerable shades of lovely colour. Near it was a horse-chestnut, with but a few leaves hanging on its branches, and those a deep orange.

The limes, I see, are already bare.

To-night the wind is loud, and rain dashes against my casement; to-morrow I shall awake to a sky of winter.

GEORGE GISSING
(*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*)

THE WINTER'S MORN

ARTIST unseen! that, dipt in frozen dew,
Hast on the glittering glass thy pencil laid,
Ere from yon sun the transient visions fade,
Swift let me trace the forms thy fancy drew!
Thy towers and palaces of diamond hue,
Rivers and lakes of lucid crystal made,
And hung in air hoar trees of branching shade,
That liquid pearl distil: thy scenes renew,
Whate'er old bards or later fictions feign,
Of secret grottos underneath the wave,
Where nereids roof with spar the amber cave;
Or bowers of bliss, where sport the fairy train,
Who, frequent by the moonlight wanderer seen,
Circle with radiant gems the dewy green.

WILLIAM SOTHEBY

WINTER

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl
Tu-whit!
To-who! A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all about the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl—
Then nightly sings the staring owl
Tu-whit!
To-who! A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(*Love's Labour's Lost: Act V. Scene 2*)

WINTER

I, SINGULARLY moved
To love the lovely that are not beloved.
Of all the seasons, most
Love Winter, and to trace
The sense of the Trophonian pallor on her face.
It is not death, but plenitude of peace;
And the dim cloud that does the world enfold
Hath less the characters of dark and cold
Than warmth and light asleep,
And correspondent breathing seems to keep
With the infant harvest, breathing soft below
Its eider coverlet of snow.
Nor is in field or garden anything
But, duly look'd into, contains serene
The substance of things hoped for, in the Spring,
And evidence of Summer not yet seen.
On every chance-mild day
That visits the moist shaw,
The honeysuckle, 'sdaining to be crost
In urgence of sweet life by sleet or frost,
'Voids the time's law
With still increase
Of leaflet new, and little, wandering spray;
Often, in sheltering brakes,
As one from rest disturb'd in the first hour,
Primrose or violet bewilder'd wakes,
And deems 'tis time to flower;
Though not a whisper of her voice he hear,
The buried bulb does know
The signals of the year,
And hails far Summer with his lifted spear.

COVENTRY PATMORE

MEMORIES

THE sweet Spring flowers! I can see them yet,
The primrose pale, the violet,
And the golden, nodding daffodil—
Through a mist of years I can see them still!
And I was the blithest and happiest maid,
As over the meadow lands I stray'd;
My hands were laden with blossoms bright,
My heart as a singing-bird's was light,
And never a sorrow marred my way,
For the world is fair when the time is May!

In the Summer of life the roses sweet
Scattered their petals beneath my feet!
I plucked the blossoms in clusters fair
To grace my bosom and deck my hair,
And I heeded not, as I gathered them,
The thorns that grew upon every stem;
For their sting to me was a trouble small—
One beautiful rose was worth it all.
I took them together, the joy and the pain,
And found that the sunshine outweighed the rain!

Anon, as the time passed on, I saw
The ruddy tint on the hip and haw;
The dahlias bloomed in the garden-beds,
The sunflow'rs lifted their heavy heads,
And the foliage deepened to golden brown
Till the yellow leaves came fluttering down.
And then, with the Autumn's wondrous store,
A peace I had never known before,
A mellow love, a joy divine,
Crept into this happy life of mine!

Then the Winter came, and the snow fell fast,
And my sunny hair turned white at last;
But what does it matter if locks grow grey
So long as one's heart still lives in May?
And now, as I sit and dream like this,
I feel on my cheek Spring's warm, young kiss:
And two little hands, so lovingly,
Have gathered the year's first flowers for me.
How sweet is the merry voice I hear—
"I've brought you some snowdrops, Granny dear!"

CONSTANCE M. LOWE



A SONG



FLOWERS OF KINDNESS: A SONG

THERE's many a flower that blows away in gladness,
Without a glance upon its beauteous bloom;
And still it grows without a trace of sadness,
And scents the room.

There's many a heart, by sorrow often shaken,
That beats serenely through the long, dark day,
And brightens all though feels itself forsaken,
From home away.

But still the future brings its gleams of glory,
And ne'er a seed of kindness goes astray;
And golden autumn, after summer's story,
Brings harvest day.

WALTER SMYTH

(*Chambers' Journal, Sept.* 1904)





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